

HOME NEWS

Price controls key to continued understanding with the Government, Mr Scanlon says

From Tim Jones
Labour Reporter
Eastbourne

The future of the special relationship between the Government and the TUC will depend on effective action to control prices, Mr Hugh Scanlon, president of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers, made clear yesterday when he said he was confident a Labour government would be maintained in power if it understood the "real depth of feeling of ordinary working people over continuing price rises and the erosion of living standards".

In his presidential address to the union's national conference, at Eastbourne, Mr Scanlon echoed the warnings given by Mr Jones, of the transport workers, that failure to act on prices might endanger the concord between the two sides.

Despite last week's decision by his union's dominant engineering section to reject a further round of wage restraint, he added that recent developments had emphasized once again the need for the TUC to keep talking to the Government. These developments included the Government's apparent intention to shelve the increase in petrol taxation and to make tax cuts not conditional on a phase three agreement. He made no specific comment on the possibility of a phase three agreement but, in an obvious reference to the Liberal Party, he said he wished the unions had as much power to compel the Government to react as some parties.

The Government's proposed concessions, he added, should not reappear in some other form as burdens on working people, especially in view of the extra burden they were suffering because of the relative lack of success Britain had in the EEC food policy negotiations. Mr Scanlon said he was

delighted that at their week-end summit leaders of the seven richest capitalist countries had put the need to reduce unemployment and fight inflation at the top of their list of priorities. "It is an important reason why we must keep up pressure on the Government to take steps to improve job-creation, particularly for young people", he said. "Paradoxically, it is a degree of inflation in the more prosperous countries of West Germany, the United States and Japan, and it is unfortunate that there has been a considerable stress on what is euphemistically termed an extension of free trade."

The trading practices of some countries, he said, strengthened the demands for the imposition of selective import controls. Despite the conference passed overwhelmingly a motion calling for the nationalization of the car industry so that planning would be under workers' control.

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Staff cuts 'damaging industrial strategy'

By Paul Roudledge
Labour Editor

The Government was accused yesterday by the Society of Civil and Public Servants, members of which have access to ministerial information, of undermining the industrial strategy agreed with the TUC by cutting key posts in the Departments of Trade, Industry, and Prices and Consumer Protection.

The union said that "information now coming through" clearly showed that some of the main planks of the White Paper, *An Approach to Industrial Strategy*, would be seriously undermined by the loss of 1,540 jobs under the public spending cuts.

It identifies some of the effects of the cuts as follows: 1. Greater delays in implementing the selective financial assistance scheme, through the loss of 60 jobs in regional offices processing claims for state cash help; 2. A rundown in work on planning agreements with industry, about which the TUC has expressed anxiety, with 50 jobs to go in the Department of Industry division working on agreements with seven named companies; 3. Reduced export capability because of cuts in services to industry, including overseas fairs, and new charges for export services (100 jobs are to be cut in Export House and 30 in regional export promotion offices); 4. Abolition of all 20 hire purchase inspector posts, "effectively withdrawing hire purchase controls" when the Government is supposed to be fighting inflation by controlling the money supply.

The union, which represents middle and executive grades of the Civil Service, argued last night: "These cuts are in total contradiction to the declared policies of the Government on industrial strategy and the reduction of inflation. It is lodged opposition to the cuts by all possible means."

Miss Judith Knight, assistant general secretary, said: "We question how much the Cabinet and Parliament understand the damage that is being done."

On selective finance for industry, the union says that the cut of 60 jobs will mean that many companies will not find it worth while to proceed with investment plans.

The cuts in staff working on planning agreements, so close to the TUC's heart, will slow talks with seven companies mentioned by the union as discussing such schemes with the Government: British Leyland, Babcock and Wilcox, Clarke Chapman, Head Wrightson, Whessoe, GEC and Reynolds Parsons.

"Instead of building up staff in the division to go out and seek and negotiate planning agreements, the cuts in this area can only reflect the degree of optimism which the department place in the future of planning agreements or else a recognition that a fundamental part of the Government's industrial strategy is now a dead duck", the union says.

Turning to the issue of food subsidies, it said: "Since many staff are being cut as a result of the cuts in food subsidies, the whole future of a Department of Prices and Consumer Protection must now be seriously in doubt."

Attention is drawn to further reductions at the National Physical Laboratory at Teddington and the National Engineering Laboratory at East Kilbride, and a halving of the number of inspectors, who since 1966 have controlled the standards of food and water provided on board ships.

The union concluded its disclosures by saying: "In addition to these specific cuts, the manpower cuts that are taking place in all divisions will lead to a distinct reduction in all the services offered to industry, and a reduction in the policy work being done for the Government."

Mr Len Murray, TUC general secretary, agreed in reply to questioning that in grasping forward with further redistribution of income in favour of those who were not economically productive there was a danger that the productive would get less and economic growth would slow or stop.

But equally valid, he said, were the arguments for improving the use of labour resources by creating opportunities for all people to earn more through increasing their economic effectiveness.

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Mr Jackson demands a fairer deal on incomes

From John Roper
Bournemouth

Mr Tom Jackson, general secretary of the Union of Post Office Workers, said yesterday that despite all the cynicism about the social contract it had held together far more effectively than every pay restraint attempt so far.

Wages had been kept down, inflation had been curbed and the strike figure was the lowest for 25 years, he told the Royal College of Nursing conference, at Bournemouth.

But although he believed a third year of pay restraint is essential if we are not to lose the benefits of the past two years' sacrifices, it must be more flexible, he said. "The 5% and 5 per cent policies have stacked up a series of grave anomalies."

First, the fall in living standards must be arrested this year. Union members could no longer be expected to accept cuts in their standard of living. Second, the question of differentials, the pay policies had eroded and ossified; differentials and incentives for skilled workers had been reduced.

Third was compensation. The failure to negotiate the pay supplement into basic pay had meant real unfairness.

In an all-day debate on politics and professionalism, representatives of the 30,000 members heard Professor Max Beloff, Principal of University College, Buckingham, say that the political climate was so hostile to the professions and professionalism that much of the energy of professional leaders had to go in fighting off political attacks.

Doctors and nurses among others were being forced into politics because their own requirements demanded it. It seemed to be one of the most important of the many reasons why Britain was in a crisis.

There was spontaneous applause when Professor Beloff said that when professional people worked to government-financed organisations such as the health or education services the overheads of control and administration required to guarantee proper use of public funds had an appalling tendency to grow at the expense of the actual services provided.

The question of strike action by a professional body was raised, and it was pointed out that the medical profession had pleaded the safeguarding of patients' interests.

Miss Catherine Hall, general secretary of the college, was applauded when she said that strike action could not be justified.

Mr Douglas, who retires in December, has long had a reputation for dissent. He marked his final appearance before the Commons Select Committee on Expenditure with remarks of a candour rarely used in public by a civil servant about his political views.

The committee had given Sir Douglas examples of absurd guidelines sent by central government departments to local authorities, such as the definition of a road from the Department of Education and Science and rules on measuring the length of cut grass in parks and playing fields from the Department of the Environment.

Sir Douglas commented: "A great deal of local government activity over the past 10 years has come from junior ministers in departments seeking to create a reputation for activity."

But he readily admitted that ministers were overworked. Attendance at the Commons, overseas visits and answering correspondence contributed to that. "There is also a problem to which I see no easy solution. It is the increasingly technical work that ministers have to do in committees," he added.

Sir Douglas denied suggestions made in the diaries of the late Mr Richard Crossman that civil servants deliberately overworked ministers to diminish their influence on policy. Civil servants, he said, had an incentive to ensure that the reverse was true.

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Princess Marie-Astrid of Luxembourg in Cambridge where she is taking an English course.

Ministers blamed for growth

By Peter Hennessy

The responsibility for much of the expansion of local government in recent years was placed firmly on the shoulders of ministers yesterday by Sir Douglas Allen, Head of the Home Civil Service.

Sir Douglas, who retires in December, has long had a reputation for dissent. He marked his final appearance before the Commons Select Committee on Expenditure with remarks of a candour rarely used in public by a civil servant about his political views.

The committee had given Sir Douglas examples of absurd guidelines sent by central government departments to local authorities, such as the definition of a road from the Department of Education and Science and rules on measuring the length of cut grass in parks and playing fields from the Department of the Environment.

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Councils get more flexibility in finance

By Our Local Government Correspondent

Mr Ernals, Secretary of State for Social Services, has issued a revised circular to health and local authorities on joint planning and financing in the light of consultations with local councils.

"It provides for a more flexible use of planning and finance provisions compared with the original draft circular of March, 1976. Last March Mr Ernals announced a substantial increase in the funds available for joint projects."

Mr Ernals said in the circular, released yesterday, that the new draft circular, and the more flexible terms, will provide a big fillip to the Cinderella services.

Mr Ernals said local authorities had put many points to the department during extensive consultations. "As a result, we have made several changes to meet the problem of local authorities' commitments to the future funding of new projects."

Mr Ernals said the general rule that 60 per cent of the cost of new projects should not be more than 60 per cent of the total cost.

The department has decided to keep five years as the normal period of revenue support, but will provide for a review after three years to consider a possible extension to six or seven years. There is also agreement now to the use of joint financing money to encourage voluntary organisations to meet local needs.

£7 rebate plan criticized

Trade union leaders opposing 70,000 workers, and yesterday that the Post Office profit on telecommunications should be used to subsidize the cost of equipment and new thousands of jobs, instead of being given as a £7 rebate to subscribers.

A statement after a meeting of 11 unions said they would be insisting that the Government should change the Post Office decision.

Mugging risk in drink extension

More pensioners might be mugged in the future if public houses opened later, the Christian Economic and Social Research Foundation suggest in a report published today. It refers to the risk of pensioners leaving post offices with considerable sums at times when they might be attacked by people who had been drinking.

Baby elephant

A baby elephant believed to be the first conceived and born alive in Britain was announced by Chester Zoo yesterday. It is Indian mother Indu, five months old, is 16 years.

Provost found dead

Mr Alastair Gardner, a former lord provost of Arbroath, was found dead in his car at Lom, near Edinburgh, yesterday. The police do not suspect a crime.

Government 'must intervene in industry to fight low pay'

By Neville Hodgkinson
Social Policy Correspondent

Intervention in the running of industry is the Government's most important task if it is to fight low pay without increasing unemployment, the TUC said yesterday.

It was giving evidence to the Royal Commission on the Distribution of Income and Wealth, which is considering lower incomes.

Industrial reconstruction, training, and manpower planning to take workers from low pay industries into high-pay

ones would be logical if there were full employment and rapid economic growth, the TUC said. But a simple strategy of that kind might not be acceptable now.

"The area of concentration must therefore be to bring about the necessary industrial restructuring and increases in productivity with the least possible damaging effect on employment prospects. The major role of government in achieving this object will be to pursue an effective strategy of intervention in industry."

There should be emphasis on investment that would create

jobs requiring higher levels of skill, and the Manpower Services Commission and private employers must devote far more resources to training.

The TUC pointed out that the commission's terms of reference, the lowest quarter of households by income, received seven eighths of their income as social security benefits.

That did not mean that low pay was unimportant to that group, which was most vulnerable to unemployment and had the least resources to help its members when their earnings stopped because of illness, redundancy or retirement. But gaps in the national insurance scheme should be filled and the level of benefits raised in relation to average earnings.

"In the TUC's view, the fact that for a few families supplementary benefits provide a larger income than wages is a condemnation of low basic wages and excessive burden of taxation at the lower levels rather than of the level of social security benefits."

"The general council do not believe that merely because people are isolated from the income-creating activities of the economy they should be

deprived of a decent standard of living."

Mr Len Murray, TUC general secretary, agreed in reply to questioning that in grasping forward with further redistribution of income in favour of those who were not economically productive there was a danger that the productive would get less and economic growth would slow or stop.

But equally valid, he said, were the arguments for improving the use of labour resources by creating opportunities for all people to earn more through increasing their economic effectiveness.

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HOME NEWS

Improper action by some barristers on plea changes alleged

By Marcel Barlow
Legal Correspondent

A report suggesting that several barristers had improperly persuaded their clients to change their pleas from guilty to not guilty, in the summer in spite of strong opposition by the Bar Council, which has told the Home Office that its publication in its present form would be against the public interest, dangerous and misleading.

The dispute has however, raised questions not only about the conduct of criminal cases by barristers but also about the ethics of research and the independence of research bodies from the government departments that finance them.

The report, prepared by Dr John Baldwin and Dr Michael McConville of the Birmingham University Institute of Judicial Administration, contains the result of a survey of 150 defendants who had changed their pleas to guilty at a late stage. That survey was itself a spin-off from a larger research project on the reasons behind acquittal verdicts by juries.

The survey showed according to its authors, that a minority of barristers had used improper methods to go beyond approved professional behaviour, to persuade their clients to plead guilty. Others while within the guidelines laid down in the main case on the subject, nevertheless used questionable methods.

The Bar Council learnt about the findings in January, and afterwards wrote to both the researchers and the Home Office, which had granted the £32,000 grant to the institute for the project, expressing misgivings about the research methodology.

It complained that barristers had not been asked to comment on the allegations about

Britain may claim EEC school milk subsidy

By Hugh Clayton

Ministers will consider claiming an EEC grant worth 3p a pint on school milk, Mr. Silkin, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, said yesterday. The scheme would be worth more than £1m a year to Britain for five years.

It was agreed at the last meeting of the council of Community Ministers, in London, which Mr. Silkin is president. It is part of the campaign to reduce the European milk surplus by stimulating consumption.

Mr. Silkin said he was conscious of the fact that the Federation in Birmingham they would put the idea to his colleagues in the Cabinet.

The present British school milk scheme enables more than 150 million pints of milk to be supplied free to young children at a cost of about £15m a year. Dairy traders are worried about an EEC campaign to undermine Britain's doorstep delivery of milk, when the United Kingdom drops the full rigours of the common agricultural policy at the end of the year.

Mr. Brian Hayes, a deputy secretary of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, said the Community would increase its milk surplus if it forced Britain to dismantle her marketing system.

Mr. Hayes said such a change would mean an extra 200,000 tonnes of butter and 400,000 tonnes of skim milk powder every year to add to the Community surplus.

Better than that, a call for a complete ban on all New Zealand butter and cheese imports to Britain was demanded by the federation (the Press Association reports). The demand was strongly backed by Ireland and Denmark. It was later described as irresponsible and outrageous by the New Zealand Dairy Board. Mr. Silkin also criticised the call.



Water-borne petition: Boys from Otter, Chertsey, Surrey, went down the Thames in canoes, dinghies and a motor cruiser to hand a petition to Mrs. Williams, Secretary of State for Education and Science, appealing for the continued existence of the maintained boarding school, which was founded by Surrey County Council in 1948 and which the council has voted to close.

Probation for man with 'appalling' record

Mr Justice Jupp, at York Crown Court yesterday, placed on probation for two years Robert Peter Small, aged 52, who, he said, had an appalling record.

He told Mr Small, of Putney Lane, York, who had admitted three burglary offences and one deception charge, that he wished the probation services luck in dealing with him.

"It is up to you to help the probation service and help me live this down," he added.

"You have an appalling record, 30 previous convictions, 17 prison sentences and 18 times before the courts for offences of dishonesty."

"It is not much use to the community to keep you in prison, which is expensive. No doubt I shall be criticized for giving you a chance. It will make the whole legal system look foolish if I put you on probation and then you break into someone else's house."

Jail for plot to defraud tourist board

Geoffrey Leonard Allen was sentenced at Norwich Crown Court yesterday to 12 months' imprisonment for his part in a plot to swindle the English Tourist Board of more than £10,000 in grants.

The sentence will be consecutive to a seven-year jail term imposed on Mr Allen in January for his part in a fire insurance fraud involving Brigadier Mill, Norfolk.

His son, Geoffrey Davies Allen, Alisdair Strachan, a Colchester solicitor, and Carin Smy, a Norfolk housewife, were all cleared of any involvement in an alleged Tourist Board conspiracy. The trial of those three was halted yesterday when Mr Justice Gibson directed the jury to return verdicts of not guilty.

Mr Allen, aged 59, who was living at Fulham Market, Norfolk, after his arrest, pleaded guilty to three charges of conspiring with others to defraud the tourist board.

Natural resources exploited to the full

People still arrive at the Centre for Alternative Technology expecting to be amused by the sight of hairy eccentric inventors in their natural habitat. But, after 18 months in business, the people who run it believe they have broken the eccentric barrier.

Increasingly, the centre is recognized as a serious research laboratory, and its windmills, water wheels, solar panels, hydro-turbines and building methods are thought to point the way to the energy saving society we shall have to be, as the oil wells run dry.

So far, 60,000 people have visited the centre at the foot of a mountain near Machynlleth, North Wales, and 60,000 are expected to visit in this summer.

They will see engineers, scientists and their helpers, living in a cottage community, with exhibition hall and offices, all powered by the breeze, the sun and mountain streams.

This is by no means one of those "whimsical and meditation open communities". Nor is it Reeth, Robinson. The centre was founded by the Society for Environmental Investigation as a permanent exhibition and practical experimental laboratory, showing how better use can be made of natural resources and how waste can be avoided. It is the offices are heated by the largest solar roof in Britain; and the cottages are powered by windmills and solar panels, storing energy either in hot water tanks or batteries.

Mr. Roderick James, the director of the centre, says: "Of course, many of the devices we use here, like windmills, are very old in principle. Our function is to show how simple machines and a little care can prevent waste and save energy. We aim to encourage people to be less materialistic and more self-sufficient. We cannot go on taking oil for granted."

The centre was founded with £25,000 given by three donors, and has been helped by £27,000 in grants. Much of the labour has been done by volunteers. The centre is in a reclaimed slate quarry and its cottages were rebuilt from ruins.

Other buildings were made from slate waste.

This summer, the centre will experiment with bricks made from rammed earth in a simple machine of a kind used in Africa and south America. Roderick James says that with this machine two men can build a small house in a week, using £25 of cement.

Naturally, the centre has nothing to do with chemical fertilizers. Some organic waste is fed into a tank to make

methane gas for cooking and heating, and all human waste is used in the gardens. "How absurd for local authorities to flush sewage out to sea," Roderick James says. "It is a valuable resource."

The centre tests and improves a variety of wind and water machines and solar panels. One of the points of the solar-panel display is that some panels are better than others, and visitors can see for themselves which ones weather best.

Roderick James says: "We know that some of our machines and ideas seem crazy but everyone is gradually becoming more interested in saving resources. It is only recently that people have begun to think seriously about house insulation, for example."

"As far as energy is concerned, there is no panacea. We do not believe that nuclear power will solve everything when oil has gone. We try to show that industry, wind and water power, and even primitive technology, have a part in caring for the resources we have. But we wonder whether governments are genuinely interested. They ought to give grants to encourage saving resources, but how long will it be before they slap big taxes on incandescent light bulbs and windmills?"

Manchester pub reopens amid cheers

From John Chatteris
Manchester

A building that many Mancunians treasure rather more than their town hall and almost as much as their cathedral is to reopen for business today.

The Old Wellington, one of two survivors of the cheerful group of hostels in the market area of Old Manchester, selected by the Luftwaffe as an industrial target in 1940, has suffered the indignity of being closed for seven years while a giant concrete and glass complex has arisen around it.

Built, it is thought, about 1550, and for a period the home of the Byron family, including John, author of "Christians Awake", and inventor of an early form of shorthand, the Old Wellington became one of Manchester's favourite public houses and almost lost its character and walls and roof.

Having survived the 1940 bombing along with its neighbours, the Oyster Bar, while other public houses such as the Ship Inn and the Blue Bar disappeared into dust, the Old Wellington was again threatened in the 1950s when the city planning committee recommended that it should be demolished to allow a comprehensive redevelopment of the area. It was preserved, however, in one of the first decisions Manchester made to preserve something of its heritage. But in order to allow a comprehensive redevelopment to go up around it, the public house had to be jacked up nearly five feet from its original floor level.

That task has taken six years to complete instead of the two estimated, and it has cost its owners, Messrs. Chatteris, £200,000, as against £50,000.

The Old Wellington looked something like its old self to veteran Mancunians, when it was formally opened yesterday to invited guests only, by Councillor Kenneth Franklin, the Lord Mayor.

The restoration of the building had obviously been carried out with loving care and at great expense. Somebody, however, had apparently gone off with the shed plaque commemorating the association of the public house with John Byron, and one of the architects had to confess that he had forgotten to re-fix another famous brass plaque, inscribed "to a silent member" which had been put up in the public bar to commemorate a customer who used one particular seat for 25 years without speaking to anyone.

Sadly, Sinclair's Oyster Bar, which many connoisseurs of ancient buildings and of the good food served in Manchester have visited more highly than its neighbour, remains shrouded in boardings.

There have been technical and legal complications since the Oyster Bar, with its scowling sloping floors and delicately poised beams, was jacked up alongside the Old Wellington.

Regional variations in age of population

By a Staff Reporter

Three in 10 of the population of England, Wales and Scotland are aged under 15, compared with only one in 10 in the London borough of Westminster. A quarter of the population in East Sussex are aged over 65, compared with only a tenth in Bedfordshire and Cleveland.

There are among figures published by the Registrar General, formerly largest population estimates for local government areas in England and Wales by sex and age in mid-1975 (revised) and mid-1976 (provisional).

Twenty-three per cent of the population of England and Wales are aged under 15, and 14 per cent are over 65. The resident population fell by 15,000 between mid-1975 and mid-1976 to 49,184,000. The previous year, there was a fall of 2,000. For the first time, there were more deaths than births.

Natural change accounted for a loss of 4,700 compared with a net gain the previous year of 35,000. Net civilian migration added a further 15,900 to the total loss. (Population Estimates 1975, 1976 (Series PPI, no. 2) (Statistical Office 5p).

Westminster statues go on sale

By a Staff Reporter

The Department of the Environment is offering for sale 17 statues taken from niches on the exterior of the Palace of Westminster.

They are Stone Kings and knights carved from Ancien stone, each standing about five feet high and weighing about five hundred pounds. They were carved by various craftsmen in the 1850s, when the Palace of Westminster was being rebuilt as Charles Barry's neo-Gothic fantasy after the fire of 1834.

The majority of the statues and the smaller lion-headed statues were carved by Mr. Fred Willis, a Department of the Environment conservator and architectural sculptor, in his workshop off Vieux Square.

The statues for sale were put on show in a store room by the Thames yesterday: kings ferocious in anachronistic armour, some heavily bearded and with forefingers raised. The top of St. Patrick's head fell off as it had been trapped, and King Seabed looked even more fierce as the statues, horse warriors, to the majority even of stone in the London climate.

Mr. William Shaw, who is organizing the sale by competitive tender for the Department of the Environment, suggested that people might like to see the statues in the garden.

The replacements have been



Mr. William Shaw with some of the Palace of Westminster statues being offered for sale.

English call for share in devolution benefits

By Christopher Warden
Local Government Correspondent

The Government has been warned of a growing English resentment against the preferential treatment Scotland and Wales are getting over devolution in a memorandum by the Association of Metropolitan Authorities which represents London and the main conurbations.

Commenting on the Government's consultation document on English devolution, the association said yesterday: "There has been no evidence put forward that the people of England want devolution, but we recognize that there is a growing widespread feeling of being cut out of the more favourable treatment that Scotland and Wales have received and may yet receive at the expense of England."

This English backlash should be looked upon as a demand for equal treatment with Scotland and Wales, and not as a demand for devolution.

The association believes there is a danger that Scotland and Wales will gain a larger share of the national cake than is their right. It argued that Scotland and Wales were over-represented in both Government and Parliament. There would be Secretaries of State for Scotland and for Wales, but no one at Cabinet meetings specifically to represent England which "in certain regions has problems as acute and extensive as those of Scotland and Wales". Although Scottish

No mention of assembly for discussion by SNP

From Our Own Correspondent

There is no mention of the Scottish assembly in the agenda for the Scottish National Party annual conference, published yesterday. For all that has been said and written about an assembly as a catalyst for a Scottish parliament and the feeling within the party that an assembly would be a step towards Scottish independence, the failure of the devolution Bill has relegated an assembly down the party's priority list.

The conference, at Dundee, from May 26 to 28, will consider a broad range of Scottish questions but devolution seems significantly absent from the resolutions. Miss Muriel Gibson, national secretary of the party, said yesterday that the failure of the Bill was the most likely reason.

"I would not say we have lost interest in an assembly, but our aim is independence and a sovereign parliament," she said at a press conference in Edinburgh. "There is little mention either of the political strategy by which that aim might be accomplished, but party members think, it may be the centre of some hard private debate."

Local election results and opinion polls have convinced many in the SNP that Scottish independence is now more acceptable in the broad public view. What seems most likely to cause divisions among those deciding the SNP strategy is the timing of any full-scale, unambiguous independence

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Spending cuts suspected cause of abortion rise

The number of abortions in England and Wales has risen for the first time since 1974, according to figures for the first quarter of this year, published by the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys.

The rise has brought suggestions that cuts in spending on contraceptive services by health authorities may have contributed.

Abortions on women from England and Wales were nearly 4 per cent up, but most of the extra cases were from abroad. The total in the first quarter of this year was 35,370 abortions, against just under 32,000 in the same period last year, an increase of a tenth.

Apart from a small rise in 1974, it is the first significant increase in abortions since 1973, when more than 167,000 were performed.

Most foreign cases came from Italy and Spain, where liberal abortion laws have yet to be introduced. The abortion figure for foreign women was

Suspended jail sentence and fine on builders

David Norman Jenkins, said to have developed one of the largest building companies in South Wales, was given a suspended prison sentence and ordered to pay fines and costs totalling up to £10,000 at Cardiff Crown Court yesterday.

Mr. Jenkins, aged 39, of the Old Brewery, Cowbridge, Mid Glamorgan, pleaded guilty to corruptly giving a gift as an inducement to Ernest Westwood, former Chairman of Glamorgan County Council planning committee. He admitted paying £463 worth of extras in the new home of Mrs. Carol Evans, Mr. Westwood's daughter.

Mr. Jenkins asked for a further charge of corruptly giving a gift to a member of the Glamorgan County Council in 1968 to be taken into consideration. He was sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment, suspended for two years, and fined £5,000 and ordered to pay costs not exceeding £3,000.

Helicopter dispute seen as union power fight

From Ronald Fair
Aberdeen

The Bristow Helicopters dispute is running deadlocked into its fourth week. The company said yesterday that four striking pilots had asked to be reinstated and had returned to work.

Obviously the dispute is between about 100 pilots at Aberdeen and Mr. Alan Bristow, chairman, over the dismissal of a pilot who refused a foreign posting. But Bristow employees said at work see the picture differently. The strike, they say, is about union power, both in the airline industry and in the broader field of North Sea oil.

Recently more than a dozen pilots and engineers still at work put their view to the Bristow Helicopters Association (Balpa) to force union recognition on Bristow. It had tried to make individual deals with companies heavily on the helicopter

company by disrupting flights to some four fields and 14 rigs. Balpa denies that, but the language used suggests that bigger principles are at stake. It is a battle, the unions have declared, that they cannot afford to lose.

Half a dozen of them have applied pressure on the non-union company to cut off fuel supplies and "black" other services.

Unfamiliar growths of dispute around the helicopter base. Pilots on both sides of the argument have uneasily as the argument has been made to ground the Concorde and just about every other British airliner. There is even the familiar old logic applied that unless the company does what the union wants the latter will have to act in a way that could be catastrophic to the company.

The blame for that, of course, would rest squarely with the company for making such action necessary. "That kind of argument sticks in my throat," one captain said. "Balpa is in this entirely to

win the North Sea oil industry a bargaining weapon elsewhere. It would have enormous weight."

British Airways helicopters are the only other large-scale operator and they are unionized. Imagine the power of being able to close down the North Sea over some other dispute involving fixed-wing pilots, perhaps at Heathrow.

So far Balpa has had about as much success in applying pressure on Bristow's customers in the North Sea as other unions (notably the Transport and General Workers' Union) have had in organizing the rigs and platforms of the offshore industry.

An engineer explained: "There is always another source to go to. If Balpa blocks union-driven fuel tankers, then Bristow uses someone else."

For weeks they have been saying the Bristow base will run out of fuel, but we have not. Only flights to BP's Forties Field have been reduced, and that was because they have been able to ration-

lize. Elsewhere, if 25 flights have been requested, 25 flights have been provided."

Although the oil companies may be anxious about the long-term implications of the dispute they are not directly concerned because the helicopter company has fulfilled its contracts. How long that can continue depends perhaps on Mr. Bristow's ability in discovering a variety of sources that cannot be blocked by the unions.

The engineer added: "Workers in the North Sea may say they will support the strike, but making it effective is a different matter. The pay is so high and conditional on putting in the hours that a man is sacrificing a lot of money on coming out on beds at a cost that does not directly concern him."

Indeed, the net result of such solidarity was more likely to be the loss of valuable service contracts than the appearance of Mr. Bristow before a union delegation.

HOME NEWS

Home Office is putting Cypriot refugees under pressure to leave, welfare groups say

By Peter Evans
Home Affairs Correspondent

Refugees who fled to Britain for safety during the Cypriot conflict in 1974 are resorting to increasingly desperate measures to escape pressure from the Home Office to leave, according to welfare organizations in their community.

An unknown number have gone into hiding, changing their addresses frequently. They stay and work here illegally. The need to scrape a living is putting some of them at the mercy of unscrupulous back-street employers, who pay them small wages to work long hours, but they are deterred from complaining through fear of exposure.

A survey of 66 refugees by one organization, Cypriot Refugee Action, showed that 18 had left the United Kingdom. 12 had married British passport holders and the rest lead a life of uncertainty.

This picture of their plight, which is causing smouldering anger among a hitherto peace-loving community, contrasts with repeated Home Office assurances of good will. Cypriots say those have been broken. The Metropolitan Police say that 236 Cypriots are wanted for investigation and have disappeared.

No one knows exactly how many refugees are here. In 1974, 19,852 Cypriots were

admitted, 12,428 of them as visitors with permission to stay less than six months. But many of those might have come any way and it is not possible to relate the number of admissions directly to the total number of emigrants from Britain. In 1974, 12,190 Cypriots were admitted, 10,603 as visitors for less than 12 months.

Mr Chambliss Stylianou, secretary of the Cypriot Defence Committee, established in 1974, estimates that 10,000 Greek Cypriots who came to Britain in 1974, 19,256 Cypriots were admitted, 10,603 as visitors for less than 12 months.

The experience of the Stylianou family shows the sort of difficulties that can arise with the Home Office. They come from a village which Turkish Cypriots have moved into; their house is used as a hospital. Mr Stylianou has been here since 1953, but the rest of his family fled from the village in 1974 and say they have nowhere to return to.

The Home Office says of Mrs Caterina Stylianou, Chambliss's wife, that she arrived in the United Kingdom for one month and permission was given for her visit to be extended to August 6. Her request to stay here longer has been turned down by the Home Office.

Mrs Stylianou remains here nevertheless, sometimes unable to sleep at night and increasingly fearing a knock at the

door which will remove her from comparative security.

Two of her sons, who were aged only 15 and 13 when they arrived, have been refused permission to stay. Two other members of the family, a married couple, went to a refugee camp in August, 1974, before coming to the United Kingdom. They want to stay until they can return to the house they had built in the family's village and equipped with new furniture. But the Home Office has said no.

The 1976 statistics show that the number of deportation orders signed was not out of line with those for people from other Commonwealth countries: 47 compared with 55 for Ghana, 68 for India, 69 for Nigeria and 97 for Pakistan.

But the Home Office attitude to the Stylianou family and other cases quoted to me does not, in the view of the Cypriots, accord with Government assurances given in August after criticism from the Select Committee on Cyprus, which said that the Home Office should be more compassionate in its treatment of Cypriot refugees.

The Government said it had been the practice to "give the benefit of the doubt to those whose claim not to be able to return to Cyprus could not be verified or refuted". Extensions of six months were being granted to those unable to return.

Councils' £26m aid for arts is belittled

By Kenneth Gosling
Arts Reporter

Increased local authority spending on the arts in 1974-75, which came to £26m, was less than a quarter of revenue expenditure on public libraries or parks and open spaces, and about half what was spent on public swimming baths.

The increase on the previous year was £10.5m but in real terms it was probably no more than about £4.5m, an Arts Council survey published today states.

This is the second comprehensive survey of local authority spending on the arts in England and it was conducted by questionnaire. The figure of £26m represents the product of a 0.34p rate, or 55p a head of population.

It compares with £40m spent by central government on arts and museums in England and Wales in the same year. Of that, two thirds went on the arts, mostly through the Arts Council, and a third on the national museums and galleries.

Some interesting conclusions emerge. Drama companies had more success in getting increased subsidy from the ratepayer in the early 1970s than did orchestras and opera and dance companies. Growing increases were noted in many cities where new theatres had opened in the previous few years.

In the outer London borough of Redbridge, which spent 31p a head, the new Kenneth More theatre accounted for nearly half the total local authority spending on amateur drama in England.

The survey says: "It would seem that fashion shows and all-star wrestling make a fairly direct fiscal, as well as perhaps an indirect aesthetic, contribution to subsidized music and drama."

Expenditure a head on arts and museums tended to be considerably greater in London and

the conurbations than in the rest of the country.

The two surveys (the first covered 1972-73) suggested a major cut, even before inflation, in aid to visual arts and arts festivals. Help for individual artists faded. Rather than commissioning works of art, the survey results suggest that more local authorities are putting more resources into organizing temporary art exhibitions.

Some larger authorities made arts part of the work of a leisure, recreation or amenities department. In Kent, Whitshire, the arts were bracketed with public relations; in Farnham, Hampshire, they came under the borough engineer and surveyor and in Castle Morpeth, Northumberland, they were the responsibility of the director of housing and administration.

The survey says: "Finance for the arts is still an insignificant part of the local recreation budget in some authorities and a small part in most."

Nevertheless, several million pounds were said to be distributed to the time spent by local authority staffs in administering arts activities and grants.

The Arts Council has decided not to award bursaries as part of its direct support for artists in 1977-78. Five, each worth £3,500, were awarded in 1976-77, together with 25 major awards (£750-£1,500) and 134 minor awards (up to £500). Increased the scale of larger awards will be extended to range from £750 to £2,500, and they are open to artists living in England who have begun to establish themselves professionally.

There will be one selection in the present year and the closing date for applications is May 27. There were 888 applications for bursaries and awards last year. The Arts and Museums, 1974-75, an Arts Council Survey of Local Authority Spending. Arts Council Shop, 28 Sackville Street, London, W1X 1BA. £1.50 post free.

Butchers want illicit meat sales stopped

By Hugh Clayton

Butchers called yesterday for an end to the private sale of meat that is often dangerous to health and wrongly labelled.

Mr George McWilliams, president of the National Federation of Meat Traders, cited the sale of supposedly farm-fresh cut lamb in Hampshire which turned out to be a frozen New Zealand carcass with three shoulders, one leg and without about a third of its chops.

"We must intensify our battle against illicit sales of meat," he said in a speech at the BSE conference at Harrogate. "Those who intend to eliminate the cowboys retelling from filthy premises, boots of cars, pubs, factories and greyhound stadiums."

"We have no quarrel with farmers who retail meat according to the law and are subject to the same planning restrictions as we are. They have already discovered our problems and their prices are not even competitive."

Mr Douglas Glover, chairman of the pork and bacon section of the federation, called on the government to curb imports of processed pig that were underpinning home products with an unjust EEC subsidy.

"The Wiltshire bacon industry has battled for years against unprofitability in economic circumstances largely dictated by its competitors," he said. "Pig farmers have threatened recently to prevent the ending of bacon if nothing is done. We could not wish to see them driven to that."

Widow murder charge

Anthony Thomas Green, aged 71, of Rockingham Estate, Southwark, London, was remanded in custody for a week at the Central Criminal Court yesterday, charged with murdering Mrs Darle Williams, aged 53, a widow, at her home in Lupus Street, Finsbury.

Former marine gets 5 years for second rape

Less than three years after being given a suspended sentence for raping a housewife, John Smillie carried out a similar rape. It was stated at Winchester Crown Court yesterday.

Mr Smillie, aged 27, father of two children, was jailed for five years after admitting raping a girl of 18 at Poole, Dorset, in January.

In June, 1974, Mr Smillie, then serving a Royal Marine Commando, appeared before Mr Justice Park at Winchester Crown Court and admitted raping the housewife. He was said to have dragged her from Poole High Street up an alley and into a shed, where he stripped and raped her.

Yesterday Mr Smillie, who was discharged from the Royal Marines after the first rape and now lives in Ben Avenue, Poole, appeared before Mr Justice Ackner and again admitted rape.

Mr H. de Lorbailere, for the prosecution, said: "He apparently had some very favourable reports from probation officers and others that suggested that this offence was not likely to be repeated. It appears that those reports were wrong."

Printers refuse to cross picket

More than 60 members of the National Graphical Association, the main craft printing union, refused to cross a picket line of journalists outside the office of the Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph yesterday. But a mass meeting was adjourned until today, and the printers went into work in time to produce a reduced edition.

The strike by the journalists began on December 6 over a fringe-benefit claim, but the editor has produced the newspaper single-handed through-out.

Simplified Finnish social security system saves time and money
Computers aid pensioners with cost of living

By Pat Healy

Social Services Correspondent

The Government is expected this month to announce the next increase in pensions, to be implemented in November.

British pensioners, who are forced to watch their pensions eroded by inflation virtually from the moment they receive an increase with the prospect of retrospective inflation proofing one year later, may well wonder how the Finnish Government manages to do what they are told is impossible here. In Finland, if the cost of living rises in May by more than 3 per cent, higher pensions will be paid the following month.

The answer is partly that the Finns have invested in computer systems provided by IBM to deal automatically with claims and increases. In 1976 the pension rose three times in response to increases in the cost of living, at a cost of £500 in computer time, compared with £500,000 for a manual operation.

From Our Correspondent
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More realistic punishment for vandalism and hoodlums is advocated by Mr Ronald Gregory, Chief Constable of West Yorkshire, in his annual report published yesterday.

Juvenile crime, he says, forms a large part of known crime figures. Public attention is often focused on football matches but the trouble is not confined to Saturday afternoons.

"Violence and open defiance of authority are with us the whole time and are getting worse. We are assailed by an unprecedented challenge to law and order and people are sick of it."

The other part of the answer is that the Finnish pension system is neither as complicated as ours nor as politically controversial. So long as pensions can be used as an election issue, no party in Britain is likely to campaign for a system so simple that it is taken out of politics altogether.

Pensions and some other benefits, including disability and sickness insurance, are handled in Finland through the Social Insurance Institute in Helsinki. Their official literature states that the institute handles one third of all social security operations in the country, but local offices are increasingly handling claims directly. The institute does not cover either short-term unemployment benefits or family allowances.

The Finns believe computerization has produced many benefits. It has helped to improve relations between staff and public by eliminating delays and errors, enabling people to know instantly precisely what

they are entitled to, and has effectively eliminated fraud. All pensioners receive free a newsletter which informs them of changes in benefit.

Much of the pension system in Britain is also handled by computer, but the Department of Health and Social Security points out that the complications of supplementary benefit cases mean a minimum of four to five months to implement any increase. Nearly two million pensioners receive supplementary benefit on top of their retirement pension. Because supplementary benefit is based on individual needs, each claim has to be reassessed individually whenever there is an increase.

Supplementary benefit takes up half the cost of administering the British social security system, although it pays out only 13 per cent of the total allowances.

The largest simplification in the Finnish system is that no contribution test is applied before a benefit is paid out. In Britain, only about a quarter

of pensioners receive the basic state pension because contribution tests have to be satisfied. The British pensioner gets less than the basic state pension if he or she has an incomplete contribution record, or more if a graduated pension has been earned.

The entire adult population in Finland is covered for basic state pensions by paying social security levies through the income tax system. The most complicated transaction takes place when a claim is made for a pension of whatever kind, because pensions are partly flat rate and partly means tested. But when an increase is made, a percentage is applied to the entire amount so that the whole claim does not have to be reassessed.

IBM claims that Finland has kept its administration costs down to about one-third of the costs in Britain, through spending one-tenth of its budget on computers compared with 2 per cent in Britain.

Outlets must be found for youth, police chief says

From Our Correspondent

Wakefield

More realistic punishment for vandalism and hoodlums is advocated by Mr Ronald Gregory, Chief Constable of West Yorkshire, in his annual report published yesterday.

Juvenile crime, he says, forms a large part of known crime figures. Public attention is often focused on football matches but the trouble is not confined to Saturday afternoons.

"If the quality of life, particularly in the urban areas, is not to become intolerable, we must grasp the nettle now and deal with these problems in a way which reflects the universal condemnation of society."

The remedy, Mr Gregory says, might take two forms. In the short term, he suggests, detention in corrective establishments for extended periods would soon convince youngsters that society will not tolerate bad behaviour.

In the long term, more outlets for youthful energies and enthusiasm must be found. Discipline at home and in the schools is not sufficient to curb the natural energies and expressions of young persons.

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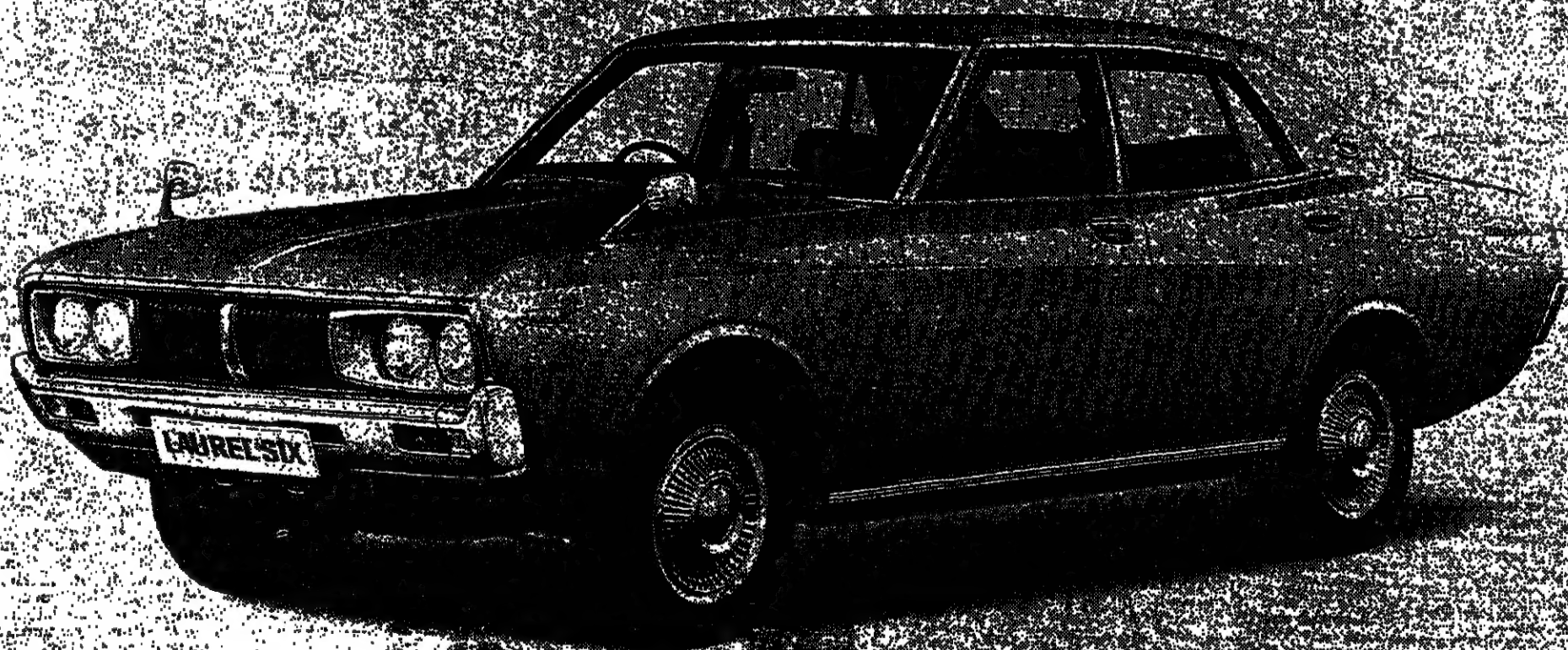
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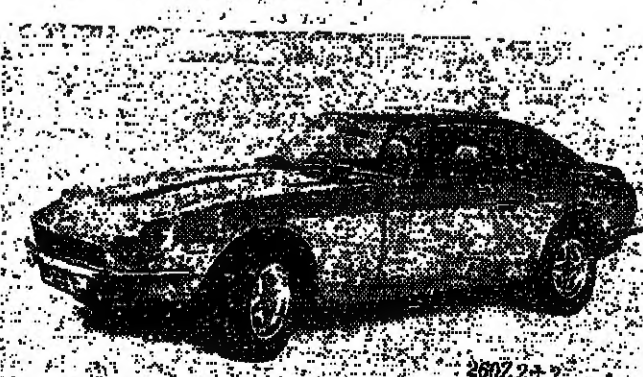
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OVERSEAS
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From Robert Fisk
Tel Aviv, May 9
For more than six weeks, thousands of Egyptian and Israeli troops have been engaged in an unprecedented but far largely unacknowledged series of military manoeuvres along the live ceasefire line only 300 metres from each other, behind the United Nations ceasefire lines in Sinai. United Nations officials and members of the American Sinai Liaison Mission, which monitors the ceasefire in the buffer zone between the two armies, have reported that although there has been no technical ceasefire violation, the shooting constitutes the most serious military activity in the area since the end of the last Middle East war in 1973.

According to United Nations and other international sources along the buffer zone, which runs from the Mediterranean coast of Egypt down to the Gulf of Suez at Ras Misra, the live firing of snipers, machine-guns and tank guns along the Egyptian side of the line at night has been reported. The United Nations Secretary-General, who is in Washington, to see the two leaders began, has decided to convene a Geneva Middle East peace conference, the Israelis

replied by holding exercises of their own. Both armies have been firing weapons, night after night, behind the ceasefire lines. On the Egyptian side, the manoeuvres have been reported to be a series of live ammunition exercises. The Israelis, who have been firing live ammunition in the Sinai, have been firing live ammunition in the Sinai. The Israelis, who have been firing live ammunition in the Sinai, have been firing live ammunition in the Sinai.

Targets set to save environment
From Our Correspondent
Tel Aviv, May 9
Dr Mustafa Tolba, executive director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), outlined targets for his organization to achieve when he opened the fifth annual conference of UNEP member states in Geneva.

Cambodians in border gunbattle with Thais
From Peter Hasehurst
Bangkok, May 9
Tension on the borders of Cambodia and Thailand erupted in a three-hour gunbattle yesterday after Thai police clashed with Khmer Rouge troops who reportedly crossed the border between the two countries in the town of Chauchey, during the weekend in search of food.

Zaire calls on rebels to lay down arms
Kinshasa, May 9.—Zaire radio today urged rebels in the southern province of Shaba to lay down their arms as Government troops were reported to be closing slowly on two rebel-held towns.

Afrikaner rivals fight it out
From Our Correspondent
Cape Town, May 9
The result of a by-election in the Johannesburg suburb of Wenzene, on Wednesday, is awaited here as a key indicator of political trends in a crucial stage of South African history.

Arab Wings recently took the chairman and chief executive of an American natural gas company from Dhanan to Riyadh for a crucial appointment with an Arab minister.

Russia gives no hint of military aid for Ethiopia

Moscow, May 9.—Ethiopia and the Soviet Union today pledged support for each other and condemned "the intrigues of imperialism" in the horn of Africa.

The declaration came in a joint communiqué issued at the end of a five-day visit to the Soviet Union by Lieutenant-Colonel Mengistu Haile-Mariam, the Ethiopian head of state.

Colonel Mengistu, whose military government (Derg) is facing internal rebellion, especially in Eritrea, and border disputes with Sudan and Somalia, was believed to have discussed Soviet military aid in his two days of talks with Soviet officials.

In a reference to Ethiopia's internal problems, the communiqué said that the Soviet side "voiced solidarity with the efforts of the people and leadership of Ethiopia in defence of revolutionary gains".

Observers feel that the absence of references to military support in the communiqué may indicate a desire for caution in the Kremlin in view of Ethiopia's internal difficulties.

SPORT
Cricket

Packer has problems but remains optimistic

Sydney, May 9.—The Australian Cricket Board will be solely responsible for the 18 Australian Tests for the "super Tests" against a Best of the World team.

As far as we are concerned, the players will be available to play Test cricket when they are not required for the super Tests.

Only Hughes and Sergeant, of Western Australia, Cosier, of South Australia, and Dymock, of Victoria, have not signed a contract with the Australian Cricket Board.

Geoffrey Boycott was to be the 36th player but refused to sign a contract when Raymond Illingworth, the England captain, was named as the 37th player.

The prize money for the Tests will be \$100,000, winner-take-all. Mr Packer said that additional prize money would be arranged for the "super Tests".

"We have an itinerary drawn up for next summer. It's going to be a magnificent series, some of the best cricket ever seen."

Tests have nothing to fear from the circus

By John Woodcock
Cricket Correspondent

To say that the creation of a "Circus of international players", expected to be announced tomorrow, will wreck the future of Test cricket is a wild exaggeration.

To those watching it, a series between India and Pakistan would mean infinitely more than a succession of "exhibition" matches between, say, Australia, with Tim Lincecum, Mervyn and Greg Chappell playing for them, and the Rest of the World, represented by among others Greig, Procter and Barry and Vivian Richards.

Before assessing how these new players are likely to impinge upon, for example, next winter's projected MCC tour to Pakistan and New Zealand, it is as well to avoid the announcement of precisely what they have in mind, and to do what the modern cricket world has done for years.

He will have autographed miniature bats in Calcutta, one of the world's most impoverished cities, to children in the crowd at £15 a time. When they are scarce, he will fling his complimentary

The international teams

- Australia
R. J. Bright
A. W. Greig
G. S. Chappell
I. M. Chappell
C. Davis
R. Edwards
J. Gilmour
D. W. Hoopes
D. K. Lille
R. B. Cooker
M. F. Malone
R. W. Marsh
R. J. Keefe
L. S. Pascoe
L. S. Redpath
R. D. Robinson
M. H. Thomson
M. J. N. Walker
K. D. Walters

Today's cricket

1st Test: Australia v England (1st day)
2nd Test: Australia v England (2nd day)
3rd Test: Australia v England (3rd day)

Rhoades: 'It may be the tip of the iceberg'

The International Cricket Conference may call a special meeting to discuss the proposed cricket circus. It is almost certain that a firm stand will be taken against a series, which threatens the future of Test cricket.

Jack Bailey, secretary of the ICC and MCC: "There are various ways in which every country involved in this plan can be affected and it would seem likely that member countries would wish to talk the matter over, either at the annual meeting in June or before then, shall be contacting them with the view of possibly holding a special meeting."

Alfred Bedson, chairman of the England selectors: "This could disrupt the whole structure of Test cricket. If the Test and County cricket Board does that we are not to pick the England players involved, then we would have to look for a replacement in England having something like £10,000 a man spent on them by counties to bring them in."

Donald Carr, secretary of the ICC: "The fact that England is concerned is the most disappointing. It is three or four of our leading players join up with a 'commercial' concern rather than being available to tour England."

Cerie Rhoades, chairman of Lancashire: "This may well be the tip of the iceberg but at the moment I see it only as a shrewd move by the players to include in their tour series in a winter when there is no home series down under."

Trevor Batten, former England player: "One hopes that the cricket authorities world wide will take some positive action as soon as possible, as distinct from what they did last summer when they issued well-meaning statements on slow over rates and bowlers which meant nothing at all."

Middlesex v Essex

AT LORD'S
B. H. Martine, not out
B. H. Martine, not out
B. H. Martine, not out

No play yesterday

County Championship
Benson and Oates v Nottinghamshire
Benson and Oates v Nottinghamshire

Second XI

MANCHESTER: Lancashire II v Nottinghamshire II
MANCHESTER: Lancashire II v Nottinghamshire II

For the record

Golf
DALLAS, TEXAS: Byron Nelson
DALLAS, TEXAS: Byron Nelson

Baseball

NATIONAL LEAGUE: Pittsburgh
NATIONAL LEAGUE: Pittsburgh

Liverpool cheer

Rome, May 9.—Liverpool will have more supporters here on May 23 to cheer them on than will their opponents in the European Cup final, Borussia Mönchengladbach, of West Germany.

Arab Wings recently took the chairman and chief executive of an American natural gas company from Dhanan to Riyadh for a crucial appointment with an Arab minister.

Now is the time to find Wimbledon rhythm

THE MIDDLE EAST'S BUSINESS JET CHARTER SERVICE

PARLIAMENT, May 9, 1977

Government policies will not be changed

is a result of summit

James Callaghan, the Prime Minister, made a statement on the summit meeting at Downing Street on the evening of May 8, in which he said that the summit was a success and that the Government's policies would not be changed as a result of the summit.

Mr. Callaghan said that the summit was a success because it had achieved its purpose of bringing together the leaders of the major industrial democracies to discuss the world economic situation and to agree on a common approach to the problems of the world economy.

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British exporters want to see a change of attitude in Japan

British exporters are making a strong case for a change of attitude in Japan towards British goods. They say that the Japanese government has been too restrictive in its trade policies and that it has been too slow to open up its market to British exports.

Mr. John Nott, chief of the British Exporters' Association, said that the Japanese government has been too restrictive in its trade policies and that it has been too slow to open up its market to British exports.

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Investments by royalty kept out of public eye

Investments by royalty have been kept out of the public eye, according to a report by the House of Commons. The report says that the government has been too secretive about its dealings with the royal family and that it has been too slow to disclose its financial transactions.

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Hopes of transatlantic air pact

There are hopes of a transatlantic air pact between the United States and the United Kingdom. The pact would allow for the free movement of aircraft between the two countries and would be a major step towards the liberalization of air transport.

Mr. John Nott, chief of the British Exporters' Association, said that the pact would allow for the free movement of aircraft between the two countries and would be a major step towards the liberalization of air transport.

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Keeping in touch with living directors

Mr. Michael Marshall, a director of the British Exporters' Association, has been keeping in touch with living directors. He has been visiting them and talking to them about the association's work and the state of the world economy.

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Parliamentary notices

Parliamentary notices have been issued for the following bills: The Bill to stop sale of title, The Bill to stop EEC farm frauds, and The Bill to stop EEC farm frauds.

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Bill to stop sale of title

The Bill to stop sale of title is a bill introduced by the government to prevent the sale of title to land in the United Kingdom. The bill would require that any sale of title to land must be registered with the Land Registry.

Mr. John Nott, chief of the British Exporters' Association, said that the bill would require that any sale of title to land must be registered with the Land Registry.

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Removal of Budget's 5½p increase in petrol tax but not on derivate: need for August date explained

The removal of the Budget's 5½p increase in petrol tax but not on derivate is a move to reduce the cost of petrol for motorists. The move is being explained by the government as a necessary step to reduce the cost of petrol for motorists.

Mr. John Nott, chief of the British Exporters' Association, said that the move is being explained by the government as a necessary step to reduce the cost of petrol for motorists.

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Huge UK trade deficit with EEC partners

The UK has a huge trade deficit with its EEC partners, according to a report by the House of Commons. The report says that the UK's trade deficit with the EEC has increased significantly in recent years and that it is a major cause of concern for the government.

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Complaint over comments by Mr Paisley

There is a complaint over comments by Mr Paisley, a member of the House of Commons. The complaint is that Mr Paisley has made comments that are offensive to the Irish people and that he has been too disrespectful to the Irish government.

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Mr. Nott said that the complaint is that Mr Paisley has made comments that are offensive to the Irish people and that he has been too disrespectful to the Irish government.

Tories seek 2p cut in income tax

The Tories are seeking a 2p cut in income tax, according to a report by the House of Commons. The report says that the Tories are seeking a 2p cut in income tax as a way to reduce the cost of living for the public.

Mr. John Nott, chief of the British Exporters' Association, said that the Tories are seeking a 2p cut in income tax as a way to reduce the cost of living for the public.

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Mr. Nott said that the Tories are seeking a 2p cut in income tax as a way to reduce the cost of living for the public.

Proposal to stop EEC farm frauds

The proposal to stop EEC farm frauds is a proposal introduced by the government to prevent the sale of fraudulent farm products in the EEC. The proposal would require that any sale of farm products must be registered with the EEC.

Mr. John Nott, chief of the British Exporters' Association, said that the proposal would require that any sale of farm products must be registered with the EEC.

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Farriers Act changes

The Farriers Act changes are a set of changes to the Farriers Act introduced by the government. The changes would require that any farrier must be registered with the Farriers' Association.

Mr. John Nott, chief of the British Exporters' Association, said that the changes would require that any farrier must be registered with the Farriers' Association.

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Childminding has become fashionable, but it can't be done on the cheap

With public expenditure constraints effectively applying firm brakes to expansion in day care for the under-fives, childminding has suddenly become a fashionable topic. Ministers have enthusiastically taken up the idea of expanding childminding services as a low cost alternative to providing more nurseries or nursery schools.

Local authorities are beginning to take a keener interest by providing training, some social work support and, occasionally, the use of toy libraries.

The interest in childminding has, however, produced a flow of research reports that point consistently to two broad conclusions. First, the standard of childminding in Britain is depressingly low even when the minder is registered, has had some training, and enjoys some support from the local social services department. Second that if the quality of care provided by minders is to be improved it cannot be done on the cheap.

These findings have led to numerous demands that minders should be employed directly by social services departments and regarded as part of the day care staff. The idea has been suggested principally because it is believed that most minders offer a poor service because they are underpaid, work intolerably long hours, and are given far too little support from the social services.

The report of the first experiment to try out the idea, in the London borough of Lambeth, is published today by the Department of the Environment (*The Groveview Project: An experiment in Salubrious Childminding, LAS/LA/17, £1,601*). The experiment was part of the department's series of inner area studies.

Mrs Phyllis Willmott of the Institute of Community Studies thought up the idea after visiting a crèche familiale in France. In her view, the most important result is that the project demonstrates the potential contribution people in the local community can make to the official services, given support and encouragement.

The project broke new ground in several ways. Most importantly, it was centred on a local day nursery called Groveview which provided training, advice, toys and regular contacts with professional staff. Nursery staff visited minders in their own homes,

often bringing nursery children with them. The minders regularly took the children to the nursery.

Unlike most minders, who tend to work in isolation from each other and meet each other only occasionally, the minders in the project began, spontaneously organized their own weekly social evenings. They were paid £20 a week (now £30) plus a daily expenses allowance of 50p for the second or third child they were minding.

Recruiting proved difficult, in spite of extensive local publicity. The aim was to create a team of 12 to 14 minders able to care for 30 children, but recruitment was slow and the project began with two minders. Eventually 10 were recruited and trained but two resigned. The number of places for children fluctuated with the number of minders available; the maximum number of places was 22. For most of the time the project was being monitored, there were eight minders available providing 19 places for children.

Most of the minders recruited were women who would not have considered minding in ordinary circumstances. Six were already in paid jobs, and four took a cut in salary when they became minders. None were working in any type of child care job, and most had no qualifications at all. They were given a six-week training course which gave them both a period of close daily contact with day care staff and an opportunity to increase their knowledge and strengthen skills in good child care practice.

The children to be minded were all taken from the priority list of the Groveview nursery, and were considered to be in greatest need of a place because their mothers needed to go out to work. In practice, some of the mothers were found to be using the project as an inexpensive and good quality day care for their children without having any intention of finding work. Their children were discharged from the project.

Most of the minded children were in one parent families, often living in poorer housing conditions than the minders. Some arrived irregularly, poorly dressed and hungry, and the minders found it difficult to understand or tolerate the attitudes of their parents in apparently missing

a service that they, as ratepayers, were helping to pay for. The minders were also frustrated in the early stages when there were delays in placing children with them, because they felt they were being paid for doing nothing.

Nevertheless, the report shows that many of the early difficulties were overcome and the minders themselves provided a much higher standard of care than is usual. Both the minders and the day nursery staff felt they had learned from each other.

Altogether, the minders cared for 34 children from 28 families during the monitoring period from the end of January 1975 to March 31, 1976. The fundamental need of most of the children was for "a stable, loving experience of normal family care", the report says. "We have no doubts it was this that the minders were able to provide."

The original aims of the project were adequately met in all areas but one: it did not succeed in improving standards of all childminders in the area or in encouraging more to register. But it did succeed in improving the childminding of the women recruited for the project and in that the facilities of the day nursery and the skills of the staff played a crucial role. The nursery was also strengthened by having the additional resource of the new childminders, and the services provided proved acceptable to both parents and workers as a "viable alternative to day nursery care."

The report suggests that a similar salaried childminding service could be attached to other child care centres, like pre-school play groups or family centres. If it was extended to all day nurseries in Lambeth, it would provide an extra 360 places at a cost of £316,000 a year, or £164,000 less than providing them in day nurseries.

That would take two years to achieve, and still leave many children without the good quality of day care they need. The report suggests that advice centres should be set up in direct parents to the most appropriate form of day care for their children to avoid underuse or misuse of the existing scarce resources.

Pat Healy
Social Services Correspondent



Getting value for money out of the social services

This year the country will spend £993m on personal social services. Despite that expenditure few not professionally involved could tell you what services are provided as a result of that spending, or give any clear indication of the priorities that they favour. In this respect, social services differ from other local authority services like education and housing about which most of us have definite opinions.

The early seventies saw an explosive growth in social services expenditure as a result of the reorganization which followed the Seebohm Report with double digit growth rates commonplace. Yet this increase failed to produce evidently better services. The percentage of qualified social workers obstinately remained under 40 per cent as the expansion of training lagged behind the expansion in local authority establishment figures. The demands which the 1969 Children & Young Persons Act and the 1970 Chronically Sick & Disabled Persons Act would make on resources were judiciously underestimated in both local and central government, and the failure of departments to meet the needs of these client groups drew public criticism. The succession of child care tragedies which followed the death of Maria Colwell called into question the competence of social workers, even in those areas where their expertise had previously gone unquestioned. Now the squeeze on local government spending threatens even the maintenance of the existing inadequate levels of provision.

Faced with an increasing proportion of elderly in the population, especially those over 75, with rising demand fuelled by unemployment and inflation, and with pressures from the police and magistrates for more residential provision for juvenile offenders, social services departments urgently need to develop a long term strategy if they are not going to reel from one crisis to another.

The structure of local government does not readily accommodate a radical reassessment of resource allocation. The dearth of public debate about priorities in social services means that present patterns of provision tend to be perpetuated by the professional pursuit of incremental budgeting, which adds new developments to existing services justified because they always have been provided. Corporate management too has failed to break into the rigidly of demarcation lines between departments.

Now then can a successful strategy be developed? From central government there needs to be a moratorium on any fresh legislation affecting personal social services until resources expand to meet existing demands. The zeal of politicians for existing solutions reached its nadir in the 1975 Children's Act, termed a

"Charter for Children" by Dr David Owen—was it a singularly worthless charter as it is unlikely to be fully implemented for a decade. But stopping the relentless press of legislation alone will not be enough unless consistent financial planning is possible. Only four years ago departments were told to plan for a growth rate of 10 per cent per annum, a figure scaled down in successive White Papers, to the present nil growth. It is far better to know that your budget will be static for five years than to plan for a growth that proves to be illusory.

Local government needs to exercise the potential which corporate management offers to see that resources are allocated rationally. Bluntly that means giving more to services for which demand is expanding and less to those for which demand is contracting, such as education. It means concentrating scarce resources on essential services and abandoning others like subsidizing children in independent schools or the wider excesses of leisure and recreation departments. Above all it means giving up the political cowardice of across the board cuts, and instead making choices about which services really are crucial to the community.

Within the finance made available by political decisions at central and local government level, there remain crucial professional decisions. At present over 20 per cent of the social services' budget goes on residential care. Divided by client groups, the elderly take up the largest slice of expenditure. Bland phrases about concentrating resources on fieldwork and domiciliary services conceal the harsh reality of closing homes and moving old folk in their eighties and nineties from their familiar and cherished surroundings. Yet the danger in the present situation is that some services, like the home help service and meals on wheels, are being progressively eroded as they are cut a little at a time, year by year, to the point where their very utility becomes questionable. Outside London only one local authority offers a meals on wheels service which meets the guidelines laid down by the DHSS. The DHSS last year produced a consultative document on priorities for health and personal social services. It was a splendid document which confirmed what social workers already knew—that the Government saw everything in personal social services as a priority for expansion, but was unwilling to provide the cash to finance the priorities it identified.

A major transfer of resources from residential care to field and domiciliary services is essential if social services are going to cope within their existing budgets. That requires tough, and politically unpopular decisions. It would mean,

for instance, more, not less, juvenile offenders would be cared for while remaining in their own homes. This is not only good economic sense when a bed in a community home costs over £100 each week but offers better prospects of success with offenders. The clamour from police and magistrates for a return to the golden days of approved schools with their 70 per cent failure rates is indeed a triumph of hope over experience. Cutting residential expenditure would also mean that more old folk would remain at home supported through daily visits from home helps, meals services and volunteers or in sheltered housing. Admission to an old people's home would become a transitional phase while community help was mobilized or physical health restored instead of the final resting place it so often is now. Concentrating residential care on those for whom there really is no alternative would demand higher standards of training from residential staff. It is a national scandal that we entrust the physical and emotional well being of our most vulnerable citizens to almost wholly untrained staff. Twenty-four out of every 25 staff have no relevant training.

Not only in residential care is there scope for more economic use of existing resources. Social workers are the front line troops of social services departments, expected to deal with a myriad of problems. The rapid growth of departments has led to a concentration of skill and experience in managerial and supervisory posts as departments have sprang extended hierarchies like other local government services. Resources of skill need to be concentrated on those who actually work with the clients. Flatter hierarchies, and a career grade for practitioners, are essential if the most capable staff are not to seek advancement through management. Many of the tasks at present discharged by social workers could be performed equally well by auxiliaries or volunteers, leaving those who remain to deal with the most complex and demanding work which is rightly a major preoccupation within the profession.

Social workers feel shattered by the events of recent years. They feel that they have been let down by politicians, by the media and by the public which does not understand them. Yet the services they help to provide are essential to the maintenance of a humane and civilized community. Their ability to provide those services depends, however, on political choices. The sum of £993m is too much to leave to professionals alone.

Terry Bamford

The author is assistant general secretary of the British Association of Social Workers.

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The west is now getting a great deal of advice from Soviet and east European dissidents on how to conduct its foreign policy. The advice falls roughly into two schools of thought. One demands a much tougher stance and accuses the west of moral turpitude. This school is represented mainly but not entirely by Russians with experience of prison camps, such as Mr Solzhenitsyn and Mr Bukovsky, whose eloquent Berlin speech we publish today on another page. The other school, while also holding that the west should bargain firmly, lays more emphasis on fostering a climate of political détente in the belief that this is more conducive to the liberalization of the communist systems. The two schools share the medium-term aim of gaining greater freedom for the people of the Soviet Union and eastern Europe but they differ on the short-term tactics for achieving this and on the long-term vision of the type of society which they hope will eventually emerge.

can be gained through a measure of cooperation. The compromises which this policy inevitably involves has provoked a lot of criticism from the tougher school of dissidents. It is difficult to take issue with this criticism without seeming to reject it, but the attempt must be made. In many ways the criticism is both valid and valuable. It cannot be shrugged off merely because it comes from men whose crucial experience is of prison, not diplomacy.

In the case of Mr Bukovsky it comes from a man who has suffered with enormous courage to defend his integrity and to tell the world about the torture of political dissidents in Soviet mental hospitals. He has intimate knowledge of the small concessions and betrayals that lead to greater ones, of the importance of moral conviction and the value of western support. He has earned his right to speak, and the criticism offered by him, and those who think like him is important because it forces us to confront the moral purposes of our diplomacy, to ask whether

level of enmity has and the willingness and to negotiate his. Inevitably this has promises and more governments, but Bukovsky sees this of peoples it has western government helping peoples.

The same principle the Helsinki agreement. Mr Bukovsky castigates about cooperation rather than ruled, viding loopholes that the west can make concessions. Here is wrong. The west negotiated very hard and successfully to the freer flow of information which it was supposed to force the subordinated entirement control or official exchanges. attempts to exclude individuals or to en rights of government field were of agreed terms of the agreement, which the west

The main reason for the disagreement on tactics is that they start from different premises. Those who believe that the communist systems contain some seeds of regeneration and liberalisation, as seemed to be the case in the case of the USSR, are inclined to look for an international climate in which these seeds will sprout. They believe that a lower level of confrontation encourages liberalisers within the system. Those who believe the system is irredeemably evil or simply bureaucratically perverted believe that it can be driven to change only by pressure from abroad and by internal contradictions within the system. This view has won more converts in eastern Europe since the hopes of spontaneous liberalisation, which were so prevalent in the 1960s, have failed.

On the whole western policy has sought a middle road which mixes concessions with pressure in the belief that total confrontation leads more easily to war and also deprives the west of levers and bargaining counters which changed by war and was not noticeably changed for the better during the extreme confrontations of the cold war, when moral absolutism was at its height on both sides. Improvements have come only since the allies at an earlier stage would not have Helsinki negotiations which would have done of the very texts he did. He gives no credit to his due.

If we stop to think, we all know that a gift and a free-gift are two different things. "Free" as in "free school" — "free NIS treatment" or "Free Democratic Republic" is often an insidious qualifier. But the distinction is easily overlooked; even the great Oxford Dictionary, having defined a gift in terms of transference of property voluntarily and without any valuable consideration, etc., refers to a "free gift" in passing without noting that it is using the word in a sense unacknowledged by itself. The "free" kind of gift is merchandise offered in exchange for trading stamps or coupons given instead of a simple cash discount on the purchase of other items. The supplier is obliged to redeem stamps returned to him, and the "gifts" are ultimately paid for out of the retailer's profits—that is, by the customers themselves.

ance of the gummy little atoms of value is not to be looked for. Tesco believes that in these hard times people are becoming keener to receive discounts in a form that they can spend at once and as they wish. The balance of advantage for the retailer may be changing, at any rate for the smaller shops with high overheads that are common in the Tesco chain. Petrol stations that offer cash discounts as an alternative to stamps are also finding that many drivers prefer cash. But somebody somewhere will always be looking for just another hundred stamps to fill up his book.

It is not necessary to be unduly censorious. Trading stamps clearly provide innocent pleasure to innumerable patient philatelists. They are an aid to saving, though an inefficient one. It is said that 71 per cent of the adult population collect them,

causes (a scheme that 12,000 groups took up in 1975). The A.C. eliminated the worst of the trade. It also gave the right to insist on titon in cash of any stamps worth more (this is not a requir the companies have concerned to publicize.

As a general stimulu stamps may have economy some servi it is more likely that effect has been to trade among competi the disadvantage of shopkeeper. In some countries their use is restricted on the they tend to restrict and assist the growt polices. They certainly a disguised loan purchaser to the sta he redeems his stan

Surely everyone would rather have cash? It is clear that they would not. The Tesco supermarket chain, the largest retailing customer of the largest supplier, has just decided to withdraw from the trading stamp business. The rapid expansion of the 1960s is a thing of the past, and the petrol crisis of 1974 was a severe setback. But the business is by now so large and so diverse, and the fact that many shoppers actually enjoy collecting the stamps is so well established, that the rapid disappearance of it would be unsafe to assume that all or even most of them do so willingly. If one leaves the things on the counter they look like an insulting tip; they resemble money too much to throw away without a pang; usually they end up stuck fast to the frozen peas. The trading stamp companies, like other enterprises uneasily concerned to affirm their respectability, have gone into sponsorship of sports and young people's activities. Green Shield provide special extra discounts for charitable

For a government party to contest an election with a genuine opposition party is so rare an event in Africa, where "one-party democracy" preponderates, that it is so not to be able to welcome the results of the polls in Sierra Leone as a real voters' choice. On the contrary, a free and fair election would almost certainly have unseated President Stevens of Gambia, the sure of its victory of this All people Congress by methods akin to the alleged antigovernment President Bhutto in Pakistan—indeed, taking scale into consideration, what happened in Sierra Leone was arguably far worse.

The Sierra Leone Christian Council and the Trade Union Council are demanding an inquiry into violence, intimidation, illegalities and corruption, while it is reported that the Solicitor-General is under pressure to prosecute four ministers on charges of murder committed during the last days of the campaign. The election of thirteen of the Sierra Leone

From Mr John Hunter
Sir, I write in reply to the correspondent who suggested on April 29 that cyclists should be allowed to use bus lanes.
Cyclists are already privileged in several ways. They are not required by law to licence their bicycles, as motorists, for instance, are required any sort of safety test comparable to the MOT test for cars and motorcycles. They are allowed to use the road without paying so much as a single penny to prove that they know the simple facts of road safety and to obtain an insurance policy. In fact, a large proportion of cyclists appear to ignore completely traffic signs and to have such poor control of their vehicles that they should be allowed to use the bus lanes? I wonder if he is allowed to use the bus lanes?
Yours faithfully,
JOHN HUNTER,
30 Ulleswater Road,
Southgate, M14.
April 29.

hence their cars. They do not need to get their bicycles through any sort of safety test comparable to the MOT test for cars and motorcycles. They are allowed to go on the road without passing a test, and a simple test to prove that they know the simple rules of road safety is not done. Finally, a large proportion of cyclists appear to ignore completely traffic signs and to have no road sense whatsoever, endangering not only themselves but other road users.

Should they be allowed to go on the road? I wonder if it is fair to use the word "bicycle" to describe them. Yours faithfully,
JOHN HUNTER,
30 Ulleswater Road,
Southgate, N14
April 29.

no road sense whatsoever, thus endangering not only themselves, but other road users.

Should they be allowed to use the bus lanes? I wonder if they should be allowed to use the roads at all.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN HUNTER,
80 Uffenswater Road,
Southgate, N14.
April 29.

From Mr S. M. Sierling
Sir, Ronald Butt's excellent and timely article (May 5) must strike a responsive chord in a vast majority of Conservatives (notwithstanding the special pleading by your contributors to today's letters column, May 7), and not least among the thousands of Young Conservative Students whose idealism is deserving of a better lead than that seemingly offered by Mr Forsyth of the Federation of Conservative Students.

Mr Forsyth would appear to postulate a somewhat hedonistic approach to everyday life, devoid of any reference to either basic Christian values or traditional Tory precepts; instead he seems to be advocating a form of unbridled Benthamite liberalism.

Now does Mr Forsyth seem to understand the limitations and constraints placed upon the use of private property. For instance, town and country planning laws, which curtail the use of land, and the compulsory purchase powers, to name but two features, serve to ensure that there is no such thing as "freedom to do what you like with your private property", however much the rights of private landowners no longer have an absolute freedom to dispose of their property as they will because of family provision legislation.

dangerous to attempt to draw an analogy between economic and moral freedom, so called, as Mr Forsyth seems to want to do, when the premise upon which his argument is based is so fallacious: the fact is that regarding the one, Mr Forsyth's evident ability and influence should be preaching such a false doctrine in the name of Conservatism.

Yours faithfully,
S. M. SWERING,
Member of the Political Committee,
St Marylebone Conservative
Association,
20 Oldbury Place, W1.
May 7.

From Mr Norman Atkinson, MP for Haringey, Tottenham (Labour)

Sir, Now that the big four banks are to go on the offensive against the Labour Party it must inevitably mean another Mr Cube—albeit this time Mr Moneybags—or even his stepdaughter, Miss Goldie Banks-Haven.

Whoever it is they must try to project the image that the banks—as they stand at present—are quite capable of running both their own and the country's affairs quite successfully.

But why? Why, for instance, was it necessary for the Government to set up the National Enterprise Board? Why didn't the banks go to the rescue of Rolls-Royce, Ferranti, Leyland, Herberts, or any of the other commanding heights of the economy? What were begged to British shipbuilders, the aerospace industry? Why didn't the banks run an export guarantee system like the Government?

Within the next 15 or 20 years Brian will be very near a cashless society. That is to say—it will not be necessary to carry around either cheque books or money. Shops will be fitted with credit terminals wired to a central clearance system.

The point is: it will not be possible in future for any one of the big four to go it alone. And who will provide the national telecommunications network to make this modern concept possible?—The state, of course.

So why don't we say to the bankers and customers that if they want a future in a modern, ultra efficient banking system, they had better start thinking in terms of a state bank. Wage earners will want the state to take over the present system which will give them the most universal, less ex-

But first the nation will have to ignore their bank manager's advice and vote Tory. Electors will have to vote for the party giving them the best banking system. Come to think of it—if the banks put political leaflets on their bank counters, why not Labour leaflets in post offices, or bus conductors giving out leaflets to their passengers? The possibilities are endless.

Yours,
NORMAN ATKINSON,
Chairman of the Labour Party,
City of London.

From Mr Robert Belgrave
Sir, Many people in industry support the objectives of a "British Brookings" and will welcome the initiative implied in the letter today (May 6) from Sir Eric Roll and Lord Trevelyan.

Perhaps the American model of Brookings, with its massive resources of scholarship and money, is not well suited to this country's modest means and less formal methods of decision-making. But whatever the merits of diversity, the fact is that the proliferation of institutes dissipates the available effort.

Co-ordinating committees are not enough. If two or three existing institutes with common standards of objectivity would join together, then those who believe in the importance of this idea could concentrate not only their financial support but, equally importantly, their intellectual participation.

We would then have an institution which could do for the full range of economic issues what the Royal Institute of International Affairs already does for external issues, in providing a centre where experts, writers and decision-makers from all sectors of the community and all shades of opinion could come together to seek a consensus on the facts underlying our common problems and even on some of the measures needed to resolve some of them.

Yours truly,
ROBERT BELGRAVE,
Britannic House,
Moort Lane, EC2.

Sir, At their recent meeting, the Seven Statesmen regarded it as their most urgent task "to create more jobs while continuing to reduce inflation". They also committed themselves to "sustained non-inflationary growth".

The reconciliation of economic growth with the control of inflation remains the overriding dilemma facing industrialized nations in their domestic and, indeed, external policies.

This dilemma is particularly acute in Britain, where our inflation rate is nearly the highest among major industrialized countries. Is there a way out, without rocking the boat?

There might be a first opportunity of reconciling these objectives in the next phase of pay policy. It is now becoming increasingly clear that a tightly restrictive policy, on the lines of the first two phases, would not be tolerable. The alternative of a free-for-all would have obvious dangers. The debate therefore must be concentrated on the middle course.

I would like to suggest that such a middle course would have the best chance of succeeding if it effectively reintroduced the concept of incentive. If, in other words, we could see a move from a negative to a positive attitude in regard to wages and salaries.

Three issues stand out. First, the reduction of the debilitating impact of direct taxation. The Chancellor has already taken some first steps in this direction; more needs to be done. Secondly, the correction of the existing distribution of income differentials. Thirdly, the introduction of effective and self-financing incentive schemes.

It could be argued that such measures would involve considerable risks and that it would be better to wait until inflation was brought more effectively under control. But, against this, there is the serious risk on morale and effort of unduly

prolonging restrictive policies. The risk which I believe is worth taking is to move during the course of the year from policies that restrain to policies that stimulate and encourage. Has the time not now come when we should seek, by positive action, to mobilize the considerable reserves of capacity and skill possessed by British management and workforce alike?

Yours faithfully

DEREK EZRA,
Chairman of the Council,
British Institute of Management,
Management House,
Parker Street, WC2.
May 9, 1972

From Mrs Grace Wyndham Goldie
Sir, I was much struck by a relationship which I noticed on Friday, May 6, between your impressive leader

From Professor Lord Kaldor, *FBA*

Sir, I welcome the intellectual progress shown in Professor Friedman's latest pronouncement (Letters, May 2) though my welcome would be warmer if he had made some important concessions to intellectual sanity in a more straightforward manner with better grace. In a previous encounter (*Lloyds Bank Review*, October, 1970) Professor Friedman did not go beyond the admission that his statistical evidence is not inconsistent with the hypothesis that non-monetary factors making for a rise in the money wage rate (and, at the same time, for the increase in the money supply rather than the other way round.

In his present letter he goes further and specifies these factors as "the potential for real economic growth, the state of expectations, the exchange rate regime, and the course of prices in the rest of the world". To anyone who has read my recent presidential address to the Royal Economic Society (*Economic Journal*, December, 1976) it will be evident that Professor Friedman's latest position comes much closer to mine than would appear from the tone of his letter.

There remains, however, one substantive point of difference. The important omission (which your readers may have noted) from Professor Friedman's list of the factors making for inflation are trade unions. In particular he shows no awareness of the role of the collective bargaining system in causing the rate of wage increases obtained in key negotiations to be quickly diffused throughout the economy. I am confident that the events of the next year or two in the UK will cause the good Professor—with a phrase which I cannot predict to fall on the line on this point, too.

Yours faithfully,
NICHOLAS KALDOR,
King's College,
Cambridge.
May 6.

From Mr. Roger Tarling and Mr. Frank Wilkinson
 Sir, The present discussion about the money supply and price inflation started with a clear and precise statement of the "monetarist" position by William Rees Mogg in July 13, 1976), who argued that the percentage rise in the retail price index will be equal to the percentage rise in the money supply less any growth in real output which has occurred two years previously. He attributed the discovery of this "law" to Dr Friedman of Chicago. In a letter to Mr Rees Mogg quoted in *The Times* of August 23, 1976, Professor Friedman

From Mr. Jeremy Swift and Mr. John Gretton

...The Moroccan Ambassador arrives (April 19) "Morocco has not annexed the Sahara. Morocco has liberated it from Spain and the International Court of Justice recognized its right. . .". It should be pointed out that while the International Court recognized that there had been legal ties of a sort linking the Sahara and Morocco, it went out in its way to insist that there were not such as to affect the basic issue of self-determination.

The Ambassador also stated that the international maritime agree-

From Mr L. J. Cadbury
Sir, There has been much talk recently about the future of London papers, this time evenings. It is perhaps interesting to recall some of the facts when late in 1960 "Associated" and The Daily News Ltd arranged mergers between the *News Chronicle* and the *Daily Mail* and *The Star* and *Evening News*. Circulation figures, pre-merger were (in thousands);

Daily Express	4,124
Daily Mail	2,074
News Chronicle	1,167
Evening News	1,132
Star	735
Evening Standard	584

Two months after the merger the figures were:

Daily Express	4,269
Daily Mail	2,825
Evening News	1,545
Evening Standard	659

Current circulation figures are

Daily Express	2,556
Daily Mail	1,800
Evening News	513
Evening Standard	424

One of the immediate reasons for bringing about the merger was the appearance of London commercial television which covered roughly the same area as the offices from which *The Star* drew its advertising revenue. *The Star* had previously contributed a modest profit to the holding company and carried a valuable part of the London overheads. As a result of a violent switch from press to television advertising, *The Star* made a disastrous slide to the red.

As was anticipated, there was a howl of indignation at the mergers, most of it personal and chiefly from those who had no knowledge at all of the economics and the legal criticisms that had been the subject of prior consultation. As a result of the mergers the Daily News Ltd received £2.1m. part in consideration of the *News Chronicle's* circulation retained by the *Daily Mail*. The company was required to make £1.5m. to the ex-employees. This was before the days of compensation for loss of office and was held illegal in court at the instigation of a shareholder who was not a member of the family. Nevertheless, this obstacle was overcome and the scheme proceeded. The shareout was by no means an easy exercise as the *Daily News Ltd* had over 3,000 persons of varying ages and lengths of service on their books in London and Manchester. However, the operation was carried out and the shareholders' trustees still hold funds to assist survivors in financial difficulties.

From Mr Alan Maynard
Sir, Your report (*The Times*, May 5) of Keith Hampson's anguish over the attempts of her Majesty's Government to stifle the development and perhaps even kill off the Independent University at Buckingham is surprising. A careful examination of government activity since the last war indicates that one of its major functions is to protect inefficiency and stifle innovation.

Examples of this type of behaviour abound. Only recently Leonard Levin has examined in your columns the laudable behaviour of the Post Office which is currently protected by Gerald Kaufman. Tony Benn has, by allocating monies to Concorde, protected an inefficient aircraft industry. The Heath government protected inefficiency in Rolls-Royce and on Upper Clyde. Both parties have protected inefficient practices in the National Health Service by failing to implement efficient monitoring of resource allocation.

Surely the natural corollary of this behaviour is that the Government should, with academic's assistance of course, attempt to prevent the development of an institution which by producing "graduates" in two years (with four terms of ten weeks per year I believe) may cost more at a lower cost? If Buckingham graduates were accepted as comparable with those of UGC financed universities, might not the implication be that "State" universities could have their budgets cut by one third? No "right minded" Minister or bureaucrat would follow a policy which reduced the number of students and all place employed academics would support them with their votes so that "standards" (and their jobs) could be maintained.

We know as little about "standards" and the cost-effectiveness of alternative teaching modes in higher education, as we do about similar things at the levels of education. While this state of affairs is permitted to continue pressure groups will be able to use their power to thwart the development of radical alternatives; their prejudices cannot be confounded by facts.

Mr. Hampson should not be surprised if the public's hostility towards University College, Buckingham is it part of a long and dis honourable tradition going back over many decades of government by Labour and his own party.

Yours faithfully,
ALAN MAYNARD,
Department of Economic and
Related Studies,
University of York,
Heslington, York
May 5.

From Lt Cdr J. H. McGivering
Sir, Three Cheers indeed (and of
course nine Hips) for the Lord
Chancellor for a charming gesture!
We were trained to shout
"Hurrah!"
Your Obedient Servant,
J. H. MCGIVERING,
17 Addlestone Park,
Addlestone,
Weybridge, Surrey.
May 7.

A Hawkins line by new CEEB chief

By Roger Vielvoe
Energy Correspondent

Mr Glyn England, in his first public statement after taking over as chairman of the Central Electricity Generating Board yesterday morning, disclosed that he was opposed to nationalized industries undertaking without compensation unwanted capital projects deemed by government to be in the national interest.

He stressed he was talking about "broad principles" and carefully avoided any comment on the controversy on the advanced ordering of the second stage of the Drax coal-fired power station in Yorkshire that marked the closing weeks in office of his predecessor, Sir Arthur Hawkins.

Sir Arthur provoked a bitter row between the generating board and the Department of Energy by declining to give an undertaking to Mr Benn, the Secretary of State for Energy, that he would place an order for the £600m power station without compensation.

The CEEB claimed that bringing forward the order by two years could cost up to £180m in extra interest charges, which should be covered by the Government.

Mr England is clearly anxious to improve relations between his board and the Department of Energy but he does not see his new role as pushing through policies that Sir Arthur had opposed.

His job, he said, was not to be the servant of the minister but a servant of the

electricity consumer, by doing all he could to hold increases in the price of electricity below the rate of inflation.

But in Whitehall, where it is hoped that Mr England will be more flexible in meeting government "requests", his words must have an ominous ring, as they are, in a less aggressive way, expressing the sentiments often expressed by Sir Arthur.

Mr England, who comes to the CEEB from the chairman-ship of the South Western Electricity Board, admits that the relationship between the board, ministers and civil servants is "not satisfactory" and he will be doing all he can to improve it.

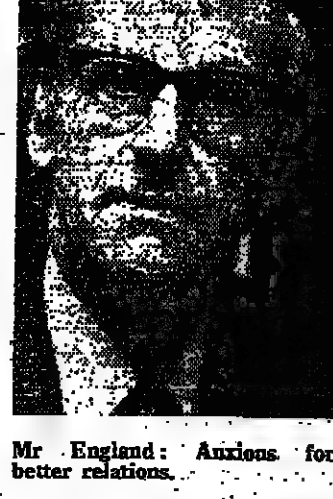
The general problem, he said, was characterized by a lack of

trust on both sides. He was sorry that the Fulton Committee's recommendation that there should be an interchange of personnel between the nationalized industries and government ministries had not been more fully implemented.

Mr England, as chairman of an area board, knows well the feeling within the supply industry that the generation side of the business is too powerful.

He said he plans to consult with the Electricity Council before taking important decisions.

He is also unconvinced on the question of which nuclear system should be used for the next commercial order in Britain.



Mr England: Anxious for better relations.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Danger to mineral reserves

From Professor R. N. Pryor
Sir, Mr Dunn has written that Britain has enough economically recoverable coal reserves to last for 300 years at present rates of production (The Times, May 4).

Professor Sir Hugh Ford has underlined the need for the conservation of energy resources and in particular of coal reserves (May 5). Mr Manners has questioned the definition of economically recoverable reserves (May 6).

The apparent controversy over whether we have or have not sufficient mineral reserves to satisfy our needs cannot be answered in a single sentence of assurance available by consumption. The recent debate over oil reserves of the North Sea provoked by Professor Odeh highlighted the issue.

Economically recoverable reserves of oil minerals are dynamic variables depending upon many diverse factors. Any attempt at their assessment or even their future trend requires substantial qualification in technical terms. That exercise can and should be attempted, provided that the limitations and qualifications are fully appreciated.

The nonsense begins to appear when conclusions are drawn by those who do not understand the subtle limitations of the information available and the criteria on which it has been processed.

The dangers of disastrous shortages depend, more than anything else, upon whether the population explosion continues unchecked, and whether human beings' appetite for consumption is ever satiated.

One sector Mr Borrle singled out was property advertising. Making a false statement about a house for sale "will soon be a criminal offence", he said.

The present Act excludes services from its coverage and it is widely thought that it will be extended to regulate traders such as dry cleaners and garages who offer services within a specified time or to a specified quality.

Mr Borrle said he was "interested" in EEC proposals for the issuing of "codes and seals" orders for dealing with relatively minor abuses, thus making them a civil offence.

This, and other proposals within the EEC draft directive on misleading advertising, would form "an important part of the future of advertising control".

whose main criteria for diagnosis and decision making are such things as GNP and DCE.

Meanwhile the National Coal Board might draw attention to the difficulties, if they were to emphasize the amount of coal they are planning to leave behind in unrecoverable pillars, in the Selby area alone, in order to obtain planning permission by reducing the amount of subsidence.

Yours faithfully,
ROBERT PRYOR,
Department of Mineral Resources Engineering,
Royal School of Mines,
London SW7 2BP.

until they become the dominant parameter in controlling the cost of primary metals.

If we wish to maintain a mineral-using civilization, and if civilization as we know it is essential, then we should try to conserve the low energy requiring metallic resources particularly of those metals whose life is short.

In the production of most metals the heavy energy demands are associated with smelting, mineral separation, chemical reduction, to the metallic state. The subsequent energy for fabrication to the semi-finished product, the engineer's starting material, is relatively small.

If, therefore, we design engineering structures in such a way that the components contain metals with a relatively short resource life, are readily recoverable, then recycling we could conserve our resources at a relatively low energy cost, for we then obviate the need for the heavy energy expenditures in the primary concentration and smelting process. But there are difficulties: some materials are not readily recyclable.

There are many other issues of a similar type. For example, can we identify the critical engineering materials which are likely to become costly? Then can we limit the use of these materials, before they become prohibitively costly, to the critical applications? Perhaps the membership and the engineers should be working more closely together to develop resource-conscious design philosophies.

Yours faithfully,
JACK NUTTIN,
President,
The Metals Society,
1 Carlton House Terrace,
London, SW1,
May 6.

Groups asked to aid component makers

By Kenneth Owen

Large manufacturing companies should "accept a positive responsibility" for developing British sources for components and machines which they were now importing, Sir Ronald McNosh, Director-General of the National Economic Development Office, urged yesterday.

Speaking at a technology transfer conference in London, Sir Ronald said that the impact of prolonged inflation on particularly hard the medium-sized and smaller engineering companies which produced machines and components.

This had led many of their British customers to turn to foreign sources for machines and components. If these were satisfactory there was no incentive to go back to the British supplier.

"I believe that this process has now gone so far that a special effort is needed to reverse it", Sir Ronald said. Large companies should accept the responsibility to develop United Kingdom sources of components and machines.

"But the better course", he continued, "might often be for the larger user to help independent suppliers."

Sir Ronald stressed the "great damage" which the inflation of recent years had done to industry's research and development performance.

Mr Anthony Rawlinson, Second Permanent Secretary at the Department of Industry, said that United Kingdom expenditure on R and D was only about 7 per cent of that of the Western world.

British motor and component manufacturers are sending a team to the Strasbourg headquarters of the European Parliament today to press for a stronger and more united approach to the problems of the European motor industry.

The society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, after months of careful planning, has persuaded 60 members and officials of the Strasbourg Parliament to meet the day.

But the society's biggest success is the presence of Mr Roy Jenkins, president of the Commission, and two key commissioners, Signor Guido Brunner in charge of energy, and Mr Richard Burke, transport.

The party is led by Mr David Plazow, president of the SMMT and chief executive of Rolls-Royce Motors.

British car delegates seek joint EEC voice

By Clifford Webb

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Last night, he told Business News: "This is a very important step by the British motor industry. We want to ensure that the European motor industry has a strong voice in the councils of the EEC."

"For instance, there is urgent need for action to coordinate legislation which makes life so difficult for one of the most important industries within the community."

"We must also speak with one voice when dealing with international matters affecting the motor industry."

A subject which will figure prominently in today's discussions is the EEC's attitude to the continuing success of Japanese motor imports and the need for a united approach to offset the strength of Japan's manufacturers.

Tighter laws soon on advertising

By Ronald Emier

Further legislation to govern the advertising industry can be expected soon, Mr Gordon Borrle, Director-General of Fair Trading, said in London yesterday.

Speaking to the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising, Mr Borrle said that the dividing line between the industry's system of self-regulation and legal control "may not now be in exactly the right place."

He said he hoped that the Trade Descriptions Act would be amended to include "stronger control over the advertising and description of services."

One sector Mr Borrle singled out was property advertising. Making a false statement about a house for sale "will soon be a criminal offence", he said.

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Bankruptcies in year doubled

Bankruptcies and liquidations in the last 12 months were more than double the 1973 figure, it was disclosed in a Commons written reply yesterday.

Mr Stanley Clinton Davis, Under Secretary for Trade, told Mr David Mitchell (C, Basingstoke) that, in the period up to March 31, 1977, there were 6,339 receiving administrative orders and 5,911 company liquidations in England and Wales. The figures were 62 per cent up on 1972 and 110 per cent up on 1973, he said.

Little change in pay shares

The pay explosion of 1974 to 1975 had almost no effect on the distribution of incomes in the United Kingdom except to cut the share of the top one per cent of the population.

Even more surprisingly, in view of recent comment, there was no significant impact on the distribution of post-tax pay, in spite of the impact of fiscal drag, of any but the top 10 per cent of the population.

The only significant change in the share-out of pre-tax earnings to emerge in a study published today in *Economic*

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Retailers are again hit by sharp cutback in buying

By Caroline Addison

Sales of durable goods slumped by 8 per cent in the first three months of this year, after a disastrous month for retailers in March.

There was an even sharper fall in overall retail trade during March than was estimated in the provisional figures published three weeks ago.

Yesterday's final figures from the Department of Trade showed a 3.2 per cent drop in the total volume of shop sales between the last quarter of 1976 and the first quarter of this year.

This picture of a cutback in spending by consumers, whose pockets have been hit by pay policy and rising prices, is particularly marked in the durable goods sector, although it is by no means confined to this.

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The total order index stood at a provisional 140 at the end of March against 148 in both February and March, the ministry said.

For domestic orders, the March index was 135 against 136 in February and 138 in January, with 201 for foreign orders against 188 in February and 180 in January (base year 1970).

The ministry said 1977 order statistics still have to be treated with care because of changes in the calculation method.

Fore-courting the motorist

From Mr N. D. J. Lane
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Oddities of Healey arithmetic

From Mr J. B. Bransbury
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A fascinating result is that if we have two senior executives, one who in fact works 365 days in the year and the other who works say 240; and can prove it, and both get the same salary and work the same number of days abroad; the latter gentleman gets a 50 per cent larger deduction from his taxable income than the compulsive worker.

This may of course be a deep-laid plot to promote working abroad and will doubtless be held to be well within the social contract.

Yours faithfully,
J. B. BRANSBURY,
Cardwriters,
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Aylesbury, HP18 9BL.

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Vauxhall prices up

Vauxhall car prices rose by 6 per cent from midnight last night. They are the last of the "big four" British manu-

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"Group sales and profit are in excess of those for the same period last year."

We have increased our exports profitably and our export sales are over 50% higher than the same period last year."

Bernard Cotton, Chairman.

Unaudited results for the 24 weeks to:

	March 25 1977	March 19 1976
Sales	18,243	15,332
Group trading profit	1848	1393
Attributable earnings	374	341
Rate of ordinary dividend	1p	1p
	per share	per share

Copies of the interim report obtainable from

OSBORN

An international engineering group

The Secretary,
Samuel Osborn & Co. Limited,
P.O. Box 1,
Sheffield S30 3TR

Eight minis costing £1m for Elida Gibbs

Eight minicomputers worth more than £1m are being supplied by Digital Equipment Company to Elida Gibbs, Ltd, the Unilever subsidiary whose products include Sunsilk shampoo, Pears soap and Signal soap.

The machines are six PDP-11/70s and two PDP-11/34s. They will together provide a distributed computing network to link the company's head office in London, two factories, and a new warehouse in Leamington.

A company database held on an IBM 370/138 computer will also be distributed to the network units using the Cimacom Total database management system software.

Four applications are planned: on-line order and delivery processing, on-line logistics, factory data capture, and control of the new automated warehouse (at present under construction).

Another DEC minicomputer will control a robot train system which will be used in the warehouse for incoming goods. Four colour mimic display systems will indicate the status of different sections of the warehouse to staff in the central control room.

Using Digital's Decnet network communications software, terminals on any of the four sites will be able to run programs and obtain access to files held on any of the computers.

Protecting privacy

In evidence to the Data Protection Committee, the Royal Statistical Society has welcomed the proposal to set up a Data Protection Authority which will be concerned with the protection of personal information held in computer systems—but the society recommends that the authority's brief should be extended to include similar data stored in other systems.

Computer news

The authority should not have licensing and enforcement powers, the society says, but should provide a code of conduct, have the power to call for information on systems, and consider complaints.

Presentation and publication of statistical information should always ensure that individuals cannot be identified.

But benefits could come from the greater use for statistical purposes of data already collected: thus the passage of information for such purposes should be facilitated. Adequate safeguards can be specified to protect individual privacy.

The society says that "all systems, including police information systems and those relating to national security, should be subject to the same general standards so far as the use of the information in them for statistical purposes is concerned."

Where the safety of the realm or the control of crime is concerned, special considerations must apply, but the authority should play some role in protecting the rights of individuals.

Offer for CRC

An offer for the issued ordinary share capital of CRC Information Systems Ltd, has been made on behalf of CSI International, a member of the French Compagnie Générale d'Electricité group.

The directors of CRC are recommending shareholders to accept the offer, and IFCP computer group, which holds 75 per cent of CRC's issued share capital, has conditionally agreed to accept.

Kenneth Owen

ELIDA GIBBS GROUP LIMITED

Metallurgical, Mechanical, Electrical & Instrument Engineering

Results in brief

	1976	1975
Profit before taxation	1372	693
Taxation	696	354
Profit after Taxation	676	339
Dividends paid or proposed	168	153
Earnings after tax per Share	32.3p	16.2p
Net assets per Share	305p	283p

"The present position justifies expectation of a further increase in profits for the current year"

Langley Alloys Limited
Hugh Smith (Glasgow) Limited
Grosvenor Hypowor Limited
Brentford Electric Limited
E.N. Bray Limited
Counting Instruments Limited

ABERDEEN TRUST LIMITED

Unaudited Interim Report for six months ended 31st March, 1977

	31st March, 1977	31st March, 1976	Year ended 30th Sept, 1976
Gross Revenue after deducting Interest and Expenses	£210,183	£744,414	£1,683,097
LESS: Taxation	302,078	277,854	620,542
	£298,114	£466,560	£1,062,555
Value of Net Assets	£38,458,988	£37,159,669	£35,080,705
Including full Dollar Premium of	4,029,393	4,483,566	5,353,996
	(41%)	(10%)	(82%)
Net Asset Value per Ordinary Stock 25p unit after deducting prior charges at redemption values	160p	154p	145p

An Interim Dividend of 1.35p net per Ordinary Stock 25p unit (last year 1.167p) has been declared for the year ending 30th September, 1977, payable 24th June, 1977.

10 Queen's Terrace,
Aberdeen AB9 1JQ.

EAST OF SCOTLAND INVESTMENT MANAGERS LIMITED
Managers and Secretaries

BY THE FINANCIAL EDITOR

Contrasts among the market leaders



Sir Francis Sandilands, chairman of Commercial Union Assurance, cutting underwriting losses.

News from the wholesale index on a new high for the year. Just now, it is not clear that a widely anticipated downward revision was about to set in. For how long the expected "correction" can now be postponed must depend largely on the strength of the institutions' new commitment to equities.

The knowledge that the institutional coffers are bristling with cash has been a strain on the potential sellers with the effect that stock shortages have amplified what buying there has been out of all proportion.

Despite the excitement generated by the index-breaching and subsequently standing firm above the psychological 450 barrier, it is worth noting also that at last night's level of 454.2 it is still more than 89 points or 16.4 per cent below the all-time high of 543.6 achieved in May 1972.

And although several different sectors have already hit all-time peaks, the performance of individual stocks has been remarkably patchy. Overseas, heavy engineering, aerospaces and public utilities and chemicals and oils have all hit new highs over the past few days.

Statistical market coverage by DatasTREAM shows up largely similar progress over the five years since May 1, 1972, by different sectors. But it also reveals some surprising legends. For example the DatasTREAM analysis shows that while buying the whole of the chemical sector would have produced an absolute gain of just under 33 per cent against a market fall of 18 per cent, outperformance of 62 per cent picking and choosing within the sector could have been an unworldly business. Flows, for instance, is still down 3 per cent, Yorkshire Chemicals is 27 per cent lower, Lankro 23 per cent, Rover 24 per cent and Kestrel 22 per cent.

Equally famous names feature among the poor performers in oils where the sector has been some 52 per cent down, of course, has plummeted with an 80 per cent fall, but Ultramar is 34 per cent lower, Century 47 per cent and Berry Wiggins still down almost a fifth. The growth in this sector is chiefly down to BP.

Among overseas traders where dividend freedom has helped induce a 40 per cent climb there have been some remarkable negative performers—Booker McClelland down 10 per cent, Anglo-Siam down 10 per cent, and Mitchell Coles still down 48 per cent to name but a few.

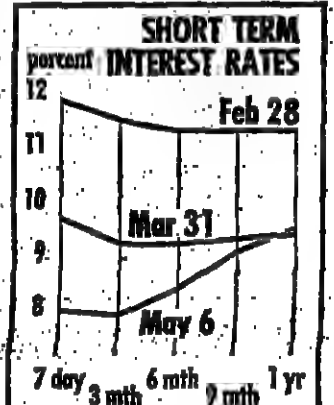
Reynolds Parsons Rationalization issues

Reynolds Parsons' shares were 12p up at 187p yesterday amid growing City speculation that wherever rationalization of the power sector has been, it will eventually occur. It will work to Reynolds' benefit, just how a merger between the turbine generator operations of GEC and Reynolds will be effected is still far from clear. Reynolds' things are beginning to move. The first is that the decision to proceed with Drexel's power station—an order that is certain to go to C.A. Parsons—has already been taken. The formal statement is being held back, however (as the "Think Tank" report recommended), until the shape of industry rationalization has been defined. With 1,600 jobs at Parsons already coming under the axe, the pressure on both Government and the industry to resolve the issues quickly. Secondly, the well-entrenched dispute between the CEBG and Mr Wedgwood Benn may be

Looking at the yield curve

When it comes to looking at the direction in which interest rates are likely to jump next, the view may be as good as anywhere to start. But some of those attempting a more scientific approach are increasingly struck by the present steepness of the short-term yield curve.

As the chart shows, the shape of the yield curve for interest rates in the interbank market from seven days out to 12 months has altered radically over the past couple of months. Were one to extend the chart to take in the yield on short-dated gilts (up to five years), the change in the shape would be very similar. Indeed, from an almost flat line out to 5 years at the end of February, the differential between the yields on short-term gilts and on Treasury bills (generally just under 3 per cent) and the high coupon



Commercial Union Impressing the market

Household subsidence cost the insurance industry more than £50m last year, and first quarter figures from Commercial Union suggest that the full cost of the past few years' exceptional weather on domestic property accounts have yet to be seen.

Greater public awareness of the possibility of making such claims added to the structural effects of an unusually wet winter following a series of unusually dry summers have kept the claims flowing in and have cost CU a further £1m in the first three months. Rating increases should resolve the problem long term. But residual subsidence claims could take the edge from an otherwise markedly improved United Kingdom underwriting account this year, help by motor rates increases averaging 17 per cent due in mid-summer.

Estimates for the full costs of subsidence claims may have been on the low side, but a £125m provision by CU against the January air crash concerns views that this does not have a significant impact on the company's underwriting performance.

A net first quarter underwriting loss of £11.2m, down from £15.4m in the corresponding period last year, reflects the company's strong performance in the Australian and European markets. Operating ratios of 107.4 per cent in the United States, although 3 points or more above the current average for local groups, and a point or two

On December 12, 1976, the Council of the EEC took another important step towards the harmonization of national company laws in Europe and the establishment of a common market for companies in the EEC. The council adopted the Second Directive on Company Law Harmonization which deals with the formation of public limited companies, and the maintenance and alteration of their capital.

The United Kingdom, like the other member states, will have to give effect to this directive within two years, subject to an extension of time limits for some of its provisions (art. 43).

That will mean another Companies Act within a foreseeable time. It will be an enactment of technical character, like the Companies Act, 1976, but nevertheless of great importance to business. It will add some provisions already proposed in the abortive Companies Bill of 1972.

This reform has nothing to do with the legislative restraint that the Government is committed. In the following, the main provisions of the Second Directive will be reviewed.

1. The main improvement of the final version of the Second Directive, as compared with the drafts which preceded it, concerns the position of the private company. The original draft submitted to the council on March 5, 1970, provided that the directive should apply only to public companies but treated, for reasons too lengthy to explain here, British and Irish private companies as unlisted public companies.

It thus refused the British private company a status equal to the German GmbH, the French SARL, the Dutch BV, and similar company structures in the EEC. If that view had prevailed, the main provisions of the Second Directive,

namely, that a company must have a minimum capital and that the shares must, in principle, be paid up to 25 per cent, would have applied likewise to British private companies.

This proposal was strenuously opposed in the United Kingdom, not only because it was felt that it was inherently unjust but because here the private company is the normal form of small business which in other member states is usually carried on by single traders or partnerships.

The draft directive was amended on October 30, 1972. This revision proposed a compromise by requiring a lower minimum capital for the British and Irish company than was required for the public company. But that compromise was equally unacceptable to the United Kingdom and the Irish Republic because in these countries enterprises sometimes grow from very small beginnings to medium-sized businesses which eventually will go public, and it was feared that natural growth would be stunted by the requirement of a minimum capital and other rigid legal requirements.

In its final form, the council directive has dropped its extension to British and Irish private companies. It will now apply only to public companies. Our private companies are now recognized as being at par with their equivalents in the other member states. This is an important victory for the British view.

2. The directive further requires the company to indicate its nature in its name (art. 1(1)). The Companies Bill of 1973 proposed that a public company should include in its name the words "public limited company" or the letters "plc". The Department of Trade still appears to favour this solution although representation has been made that

it would be preferable to require private companies to add "proprietary" or "pty" to their names, as is the case in Australia and South Africa.

3. A major change in British company law which the council directive requires is that every public company must have a minimum capital which shall be not less than 25,000 units of account (approximately £10,415) (art. 6(1)). British company law in the EEC which does not require a minimum capital of a public company.

The proposed change is wholly acceptable to the United Kingdom, indeed it is possible that the Companies Act which will give effect to the directive will require a higher minimum capital, eg. £50,000.

4. Further, shares issued for a consideration must be paid up at a time the company is incorporated or authorized to commence business at not less than 25 per cent of their nominal value. If the consideration is other than cash, it shall be transferred in full to the company within five years of that time (art. 9).

The present regulation of our company law is that the shares subscribed on formation need not be paid up at all. Here, again, the proposed change is not only innocuous but, on the contrary, desirable.

Incidentally, the directive admits not only shares having a nominal value but also no par value shares if the consideration is other than cash. An expert's report is required which will have to state, inter alia, whether the values arrived at correspond at least to the number and nominal value of the shares (art. 10(2)).

5. The directive contains detailed provisions on the maintenance of the capital. In particular, except for the cases of reduction of the

subscribed capital, no dividend or other distribution to shareholders shall be made out of assets corresponding to the amount of the subscribed capital plus those reserves which, by law, must not be distributed (art. 15).

6. Strict but not unreasonable provisions deal with the distribution of interim dividends. Such distribution must be preceded by interim accounts showing that the funds available for distribution are sufficient, and the amounts to be distributed shall not exceed the total profits made since the end of the last financial year plus any distributable profits brought forward or reserves available for that purpose (art. 15(2)).

7. Of great importance is the provision that in case of "serious loss" of the subscribed capital a general meeting of shareholders must be convened to consider whether the company should be wound up or any other measures be taken. The amount of "serious loss" shall not be a figure higher than half the subscribed capital (art. 17).

8. The directive further requires the national company laws to provide that, at least in principle, a cash issue of new shares must be offered on a preemptive basis to existing shareholders in proportion to the capital represented by their shares (art. 29).

British company law does not provide a right of preemption in favour of existing shareholders in such cases, but the Stock Exchange regulations state that listed companies must undertake in the listing agreement that the company will deviate from the principle of preemption in the case of cash issues only if the general meeting of shareholders approves.

9. It is further provided that, when the general meeting votes on an increase, redemp-

tion or reduction of capital, there shall be a separate vote for each class of shareholders whose rights are affected (arts. 25(3), 31, 38).

10. The directive further lays down the fundamental principle that "for the purposes of the implementation of this directive, the laws of the member states shall ensure equal treatment to all shareholders who are in the same position" (art. 42). The principle of non-discrimination is, of course, one of the great principles on which the City Code on Takeovers and Mergers is based.

11. To sum up, in its final form the Second Council Directive contains little to which British business can legitimately object. It appears, in fact, to have been influenced by modern English company law thinking.

It would, however, be calamitous if that directive were given effect in the United Kingdom forthwith. It is reported that the Council of Ministers might soon adopt two other directives on company law harmonization, namely the Fourth and the Seventh Draft Directives. Both these directives deal with accounts, the former with accounts of public and private companies and the latter with group accounts.

If they are approved by the council, the United Kingdom can give effect to the Second, Fourth and Seventh Directives by one measure of company law reform. That procedure would be preferable to a reform by stages, whereby each new directive which is adopted by the council is given effect in the United Kingdom by a new Companies Act.

Clive Schmitthoff
The author is Visiting Professor of International Business Law at the City University and the University of Kent at Canterbury.

Industrial strategy 8: Constructional steelwork

Is it just a paper chase?

'We are becoming increasingly frustrated at the way in which most of our recommendations, the bulk of them requiring Government action, are just not being carried through'

It was Sir Charles Villiers, chairman of the British Steel Corporation, who expressed worries at a meeting of the National Economic Development Council earlier this year that there was a danger that the industrial strategy could become a paper chase.

If the latest report of the sector working party on constructional steelwork is any guide, his fears were rather more than well grounded. There is an air of dissatisfaction in the report, in which the working party, which was set up to achieve the desired results through its initial batch of recommendations has not been as positive or nearly as speedy as it would have liked.

Mr David French, director of the British Constructional Steelwork Association and a member of the working party, reaffirmed that view: "We are very disappointed at the way in which the industrial strategy appears to be working, certainly in relation to our sector of industry, and we are becoming increasingly frustrated at the way in which most of our recommendations (the bulk of them requiring Government action) are just not being carried through."

The alternative argument rests largely on two points. One, quite simply, is that precedent is indeed set to be trusted. The other is that the short-term of the gilt market has been temporarily held back (temporarily) by greater equilibrium in the demand/supply situation.

The institutions have, by and large, been switching their interest from gilts to equities, the authorities may well have been feeding out such stock as they picked up from overseas, and we are concerned by the depreciation of the pound which is affecting most of its customer industries. In export markets, where the working party and the industry have been attempting to secure improved contracts, things are much better and the feeling is that there is little prospect of a significant upturn until next year and strong doubts as to the scale of the recovery thereafter.

Capacity utilization in the industry has fallen from a steel throughput of about 800,000 tonnes three years ago to a present level of about half that. It has been recognized that little could be done to improve things on the home market front, but the importance of winning big steel-intensive contracts overseas has been identified as a critical factor affecting overall performance.

The industry employs a total workforce of between 30,000 and 40,000, many of them skilled engineering workers. Against the background of a depressed market there has been little unemployment with companies anxious to hold on to their labour in view of the difficulties of attracting skilled workers back. Within the industry the feeling is that companies now have an adequate and stable labour force—prospects for heavy recruitment are slight—but equally it is most unlikely that the industry would seek to recruit large numbers of new workers.

The industry is in desperate need of the very large "jumbo" projects which are known to be in the pipeline, particularly in the Middle East and in South America. Late last year an estimated 200,000 tonnes of constructional steelwork was the subject of inquiry conducted worldwide.

The working party has given a warning that export orders of this type are needed now if the industry is not to contract severely. The importance of such contracts was underlined by the working party, which drew attention to the fact that about 80 per cent of the value of a constructional steelwork order is executed in the United Kingdom with benefits for employment in the steel fabrication industry and the steel industry itself, and to the balance of payments.

Falling some radical improvement in its export performance is faced with rationalization if it is to be in a position to strengthen its longer term prospects.

For this year the working party is to concentrate its work on the examination of the various strategic options faced by the industry and the degree to which resources can be found to implement the major changes which are likely to arise. In the export field it plans to examine the industry's competitive position against other nations (the Japanese and South Korean constructional steel industries being among the fiercest international competitors).

The plan is also to review the potential for improving price and other performance factors which influence the industry's share of the home market and the degree to which

prospective demand is matched by the resources of plant, manpower and finance at present deployed by the industry.

The BSC, as both a customer and a supplier to the industry, is closely involved in its future. Sir Charles Villiers at the end of last year revealed that the corporation was examining the possibility of its providing performance bonds to United Kingdom constructional steelwork consortia seeking work in the export field. Since then a small committee has been established to liaise with Mr David Waterstone, the corporation's managing director, to examine the best way in which the BSC could assist in promoting the industry's export objectives.

On the home front the frustrations appear to be greater. Some underbody arise from the Whitehall dictat that the Department of the Environment should be the sponsoring department for the constructional steelwork industry. There are those in the industry who feel that constructional steelwork would be more suitably sponsored by the Department of Industry, but a change of sponsorship seems unlikely.

Companies point to two particularly sensitive issues involved in the relationship with the DoE on which changes have been sought by the sector working party to help to improve performance. The working

party, in its first batch of recommendations asked for a detailed reexamination of the extension of the nomination principle in constructional steelwork contracts and a change in the system of placing the steelwork to improve cash flow.

Extension of the nomination system would mean that the ultimate client for a particular project, a government department, local authority or private concern, would select the steelwork subcontractor, rather than the main contractor, for the project undertaking the selection. Changes in progress payment systems would make financing of big steelwork projects easier. The sector working party has stressed that all that was being asked for was administrative action to improve the industry's opportunities and to demonstrate the competitiveness of its products and reduce certain cash flow disadvantages.

The DoE's response was disappointing, not to say frustrating—such changes would be administratively inconvenient. But, as one industry chief observed: "We believed that it was one of the objectives of the strategy to overcome this type of attitude." However, there is hope, for in the past few months there have been detailed discussions and the issues are now under consideration.

Hopes of giving new impetus to the activities of the industry's working party are pinned on its new chairman, Sir Frank Layfield, QC—a familiar figure in the corridors of power who has chaired committees of inquiry into the Greater London Development Plan and more recently into local government finance. The working party was encouraged by his handling of his first meeting, in April, and optimism for the future is rising high.

Peter Hill

Business Diary: Fairchild's Corrigan • Save and prosper?

Wilfred Corrigan, the son of a Liverpool chicken boss at 38, became chairman of the board of directors of Fairchild Camera and Instrument Corporation, the American multinational whose headquarters are at San Jose, California.

Fairchild Camera yesterday reported first quarter profits of \$24m, and earnings of 41c per share, compared with \$197,000



Wilfred Corrigan.

and 4c per share at the same time last year.

Corrigan succeeds Roswell L. Gilpatrick, who has been chairman since 1975 and who continues as a director.

He produced in chemical engineering from Imperial College, London, and from 1960 worked first with Motorola and then with Transcon Corporation, joining Fairchild in 1968.

Sauve qui peut
Sir James Goldsmith, chairman of Carvenbank, sometimes through the courts of France

Eye and possible actions of the London Evening Standard, yet to arouse the same hopes and fears in his other sphere of operations, France, as he has in England.

His acquisition of a 45 per cent share in the news weekly L'Express has been well received by French journalists, not because he is saving it from extinction (which was not on) but because the departure of the paper's owner-founder, Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, was such a relief.

Servan-Schreiber wrote in a farewell article in March: "The course of events and the political maneuvers I have been led to undertake in the last two years have gradually made it impossible to carry out this task and to be the sole head of a big press group."

Since 1969, when he became general secretary of the Radical Party, Servan-Schreiber has been essentially a politician and has tried to use the weekly to further his political career—which has so far fallen short of his ambitions.

After his co-founder and editor, Françoise Giroud, was brought into the government by President Giscard d'Estaing in 1974, the quality of the magazine declined.

Goldsmith, however, has promised to put an end to all this, to establish a clear editorial structure, and to restore L'Express to its vocation as a news magazine without party attachments.

Goldsmith says he hopes to hire new talents—which must mean there will be firings as well.

Only when L'Express is widely reestablished, apparently, will Goldsmith go on to launch a planned new financial daily modelled on Stockholm's *Borser*.

The main concern of French journalists is that Goldsmith may be building up a new international press empire which would involve a further concentration of the continental Press, damaging to the diversity of newspaper style and content.

Nobody seems to know Goldsmith's opinions on French politics.

Desk bound

The impressive walnut desk that was the centrepiece of the chairman's office at the Central Electricity Generating Board during Sir Arthur Hawkin's occupancy is to be the first victim of Glyn England's new regime at Sudbury House.

According to England, former chairman of the South Western Electricity Board, big desks are not out, so Sir Arthur's old desk is to be replaced by an ordinary office table. "I find that sitting behind a large desk is not the best way of getting a proper discussion going. Large desks usually carry an authoritarian overtone and can act as a barrier to discussion," England told *Business Diary* yesterday.

In future discussions with England will be in easy chairs around a coffee table. England also has plans for cutting through "the bump" and lightning the load of paperwork at the top of CEBG so

there is more time for the wider issues.

It's not just desks suppliers that are going to suffer. England is planning to make less use of his chauffeur-driven car in the morning and evenings. Weather permitting, he plans to take the Underground part of the way to his office in the City and walk the rest of the way to and from his new flat in Chelsea.

Transportive

British Leyland International, the subsidiary formed some two years ago to handle the state-controlled motor group's worldwide exports, has only just got round to forming a "traffic and transportation" department. It will save £1.5m this year in shipping and air freight charges alone and replaces 10 departments independently operated within Leyland Cars and Leyland Truck and Bus companies.

We understood that the *raison d'être* of BL International was to reap the benefits of centralised control and to begin to do so by cutting an annual transport bill which topped £45m.

David Andrews, managing director of BL International, when asked "Why not sooner?" was equally direct: "It was a question of priorities. There are just not enough hours in the day to tackle everything."

He has recruited Douglas Sansom, 43, from Redland Purlie, to head the new 25-strong department. One of his most pressing tasks is the carriage of components to the new Nigerian

assembly plant. It is 70 miles north of Lagos across difficult terrain. Sansom is considering using helicopters.

Air line

Those businessmen who see flights as a break in their routine could have their peace shattered if they fly Lufthansa.

The West German airline plans to install telephones in their Boeing 747 jumbo jets. Two phones are to be placed in the upper-deck lounges of jumbos operating on the Frankfurt-Los Angeles or Sydney routes.

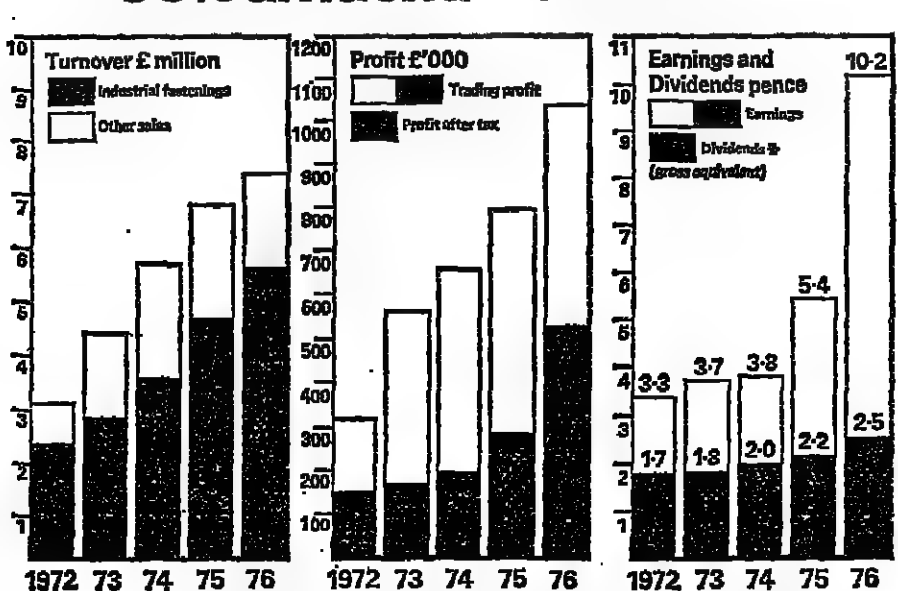
The flight engineer will connect the calls by short-wave radio with a station at Enkoping, Sweden, whence they will be fed into the worldwide telephone network. The cost of the calls will be decided not on where the jumbo happens to be flying at the time of the call, but on the distance from Enkoping to the party being called.

On top of a £5 connection fee it would cost £10 three times a week to Germany, £14 to the United States and £19 to Australia.

It's perhaps unfortunate that an advertisement in this week's edition of *Fleet Street's* trade paper UK Press Gazette, should be addressed to "crash-hot" young journalists. The advertisement is from the publishers of the magazines *Car* and *Truck*.

Coltess Group

Trading profits top £1 million
Rights issue and proposed 60% dividend increase



Trading profits for the first three months of this year are in line with expectations. The Company remains poised to continue the steady progress demonstrated over the past five years. **Eric Gibbons, Chairman.**

* Treasury approval received for proposed dividend increase to 4.0p (gross equivalent) for 1977, in context of current rights issue.

Copies of the Report and Accounts can be obtained from the Secretary, Coltess Group Limited, Station Tower, Station Square, Coventry, CV1 2GR

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Secretarial and Non-Secretarial Appointments also on page 23

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